

THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN SOME NOVELS OF T N MAUMELA

by

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DECLARATION

I DECLARE THAT *THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN SOME NOVELS OF T N MAUMELA* IS MY OWN WORK AND THAT ALL THE SOURCES THAT I HAVE USED OR QUOTED HAVE BEEN INDICATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY MEANS OF COMPLETE REFERENCES.

T N Maumela

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SUMMARY

This dissertation is an investigation of the narrative techniques in three selected novels of T N Maumela. Attention is paid to the mode of narration, the handling of characters and the organization of material in these novels.

In the introduction the author's background and his contribution towards the development of Venda literature is outlined. The storyline of each of the selected novels is also provided. The definitions of literary terms are dealt with in chapter two. The mode of narration is investigated in chapter three. Only the third person point of view is investigated because Maumela does not make use of the first person point of view. The fourth chapter deals with the techniques the author uses to depict characters. The organization of events to build up plot structure is dealt with in chapter five.

An evaluation of the narrative techniques used concludes this study.

CHAPTER 1

AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate critically the narrative techniques in some of the novels of Titus Ntsieni Maumela. An investigation of this nature attempts not only to determine which techniques are applied by the author, but also to show how they are applied in the process of creating a story. Before proceeding to an analysis of Maumela's novels, I shall first give a brief sketch of his literary career and I shall then summarise the novels that form the focus of this study.

1.1 The author's background and his contribution towards the development of Venda literature

T N Maumela was born in 1924 in the then Sibasa district of the Northern Transvaal. He received his primary education at Goldville Primary School at Vhufuli village where he passed Standard Six in 1942. In 1943 he went to Bethel Teacher Training Institution near Lichtenburg. The following year he moved to the well-known Lemaña Training Institution, and qualified as a teacher in 1945. For a number of years he was teacher and principal of the Vhufuli Primary School in Sibasa, and in 1947 he passed Standard Eight through correspondence. He was granted matriculation exemption in 1952, and in 1962, the year he obtained his BA degree, he became principal of the Tshivhase Secondary School. In 1972 he was appointed Cultural Organiser by the Venda Government Service. At present, Maumela is employed as an inspector of schools.

Maumela is a dramatist, a novelist and a grammarian. Up to 1987 the following books were published under his name:

A. NOVELS

1. Elelwani, 1954
2. Mafangambiti, 1956
3. Vhavenda Vho-Matshivha, 1958
4. Vhuhosi Vhu Tou Bebelwa, 1962
5. Zwa Mulovha Zwi A Fhela, 1963
6. Maele Wa Vho-Mathavha, 1967
7. Musandiwa na Khotsi Vho-Liwalaga, 1968
8. Kanakana, 1975
9. Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu, 1977
10. Vho-Rambebo, 1981
11. Tshiphiri Tsho Bvela Khagala, 1986

B. DRAMAS

1. Tshililo, 1957
2. A Hu Bebiwi Mbilu, 1975
3. Vhuhosi A Vhu Thetshelewi, 1975
4. Edzani, 1985

C. SHORT STORIES

1. Matakadzambilu, 1965
2. Zwiitavhathu, 1965
3. Maungedzo, 1972
4. Mihani Ya Shango, 1972
5. Mithetshele, 1981
6. Mmbwa Ya La inwe a i noni, 1983

D. FOLKTALES

1. Dzingano na Dzithai dza Tshivenda, 1968

2. Salungano! Salungano!, 1978

E. LANGUAGE MANUALS

1. Luvenda lwa Murole wa 5, 1975

2. Luvenda lwa Fomo 1, 1975

3. Luvenda lwa Fomo 11, 1976

4. Luvenda lwa Murole wa 8, 1978

5. Thikho ya Luvenda ya Fomo 1, 1970

6. Thikho ya Luvenda ya Fomo 11 na 111. 1970

Maumela is one of the most outstanding authors in Venda. He has won several literary prizes as a writer. He won the first prize in a Venda novel competition sponsored by the then Department of Bantu Education in 1966, and in 1967 he was awarded the **SAMUEL EDWARD MQAYI Literary Prize for African prose** by *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*. The same year he won the first prize in a Venda short story competition launched by the then Radio Bantu, and in 1971 he won the first prize in a Venda short story competition launched by the Department of Bantu Education to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Republic of South Africa.

Maumela grew up during a transitional period of Venda society. This is the period in which people were introduced to the western way of life by missionaries. As a result, most of the themes in his narratives revolve around the clashes between the traditional and western way of life. However, one also finds themes of love, livestock as a symbol of pride and wealth for a Venda, witchcraft, chieftainship, to mention a few. For example, the theme in the novel **MAFANGAMBITI** revolves around the ownership of cattle by the Venda people. A Venda man seldom sells his cattle, but keeps them as a symbol of wealth and pride. This is revealed when Vhakoma Vho-Gavhi refuses to sell his bull, Mafangambiti, to the White traders. At a later stage the bull dies from a snake bite.

In **VHAVENDA VHO-MATSHIVHA**, the author warns the readers against lack of confidence in the treatment given to the sick at hospitals. This is revealed when Vhavenda Vho-Matshivha refuses to go to the hospital as advised by the medical practitioner, and prefers to consult a traditional medicine man. His lack of confidence in the medical practitioner leads to his death.

His themes originate from the cultural setting of his nation. Makhado (1980 : 25), referring to Maumela's novels, says the following:

.... it will be noticed that various themes that have their origin in the cultural setting of the Vhavenda, emerge.

Makhado emphasises the point that the cultural setting of the Venda people has a great influence on Maumela's narratives.

However, we are not concerned with the study of themes in his narratives, but with the narrative techniques used to depict theme. Since Maumela has many narratives, it is virtually impossible for us to investigate the narrative techniques in all of them. Three of his novels have been chosen to investigate the techniques he uses to reveal his themes. The novels concerned are **ELELWANI** (1976) (which is the name of the main character), **MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA** (1968) (translated it means Musandiwa and her father Liwalaga), **NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU** (1977) (translated it means it is Muthukhuthukhu).

1.2 Summary of the selected novels

1.2.1 *Elelwani*

Elelwani is the daughter of Mabada of Mativhini. Her parents have already arranged for her marriage to *khosi*¹⁾ Ratshihule who is much older than she is. She is against the arranged marriage. Elelwani and her friend Mutshekwa undertake a journey to Gammbani. On the way, they meet Vele and his friend Nthambeleni who ask for snuff. The young men accompany the girls to Gammbani. It is Vele's intention to propose marriage to Elelwani. During their conversation, Vele proposes marriage to Elelwani, and she tells him that she is already engaged to an old man, *khosi* Ratshihule. She also indicates that she is forced to marry him by her parents. Vele promises that he will devise a plan whereby they will get married. Nemavhulani and Makhado are sent by Ratshihule to bring Elelwani back to his place.

Elelwani is unable to avoid marriage to *khosi* Ratshihule. Vele on the other hand goes to the urban areas where he joins the Zionist Church. Elelwani finally goes to Ratshihule's place, accompanied by a large number of girls. One day, while the girls are swimming in the river, Thambatshira, Nemavhulani's daughter drowns. Nemavhulani visits Matshinyise, a Zionist Church priest, to find out the cause of her death. For a long period Elelwani continues to stay with Ratshihule. One morning Ratshihule finds some medicine placed near his hut. He is worried and the right-hand man is called to witness what he has seen. Diviners are consulted but fail to point out the person who placed the medicine. Nemavhulani advises the *khosi* about the person who can help him in this regard. He reveals that Matshinyise, who helped him the year his daughter drowned, will help find the person responsible for placing the medicine. Matshinyise, who stays at Mianzwi, is called to point out the culprit. Mianzwi is the area where Vele's parents have resettled. The priest identifies Elelwani as a witch, and also indicates that she still wants to kill him. Elelwani is evicted and goes home where she meets Vele. Together they decide to get

1) Head man of a tribe. The Venda word *khosi* will be used throughout this study.

married. Vele reveals that he, together with Nemavhulani had planned her eviction by Ratshihule. The couple establishes a family, and are blessed with four children. The theme in this novel is to warn parents against choosing husbands or wives on behalf of their children. This brings us to a clash between traditional and modern concepts. According to the Venda custom, marriage is determined by two families. Blacking (1964 : 39) also refers to this wider family involvement when he says the following:

Marriage in Vendaland is more of a union than of two individuals.

In modern societies, marriage is determined by the couples without pressure from the parents. Motshologane (1974 : 17) says

The ideal-type marriage in modern societies is defined as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

1.2.2 *Musandiwa Na Khotsi Vho-Liwalaga*

Musandiwa is the daughter of Liwalaga and Nyamueni. Musandiwa's mother dies while she is still young, and this forces her to become more attached to her elder step-sister Nyadzanga, the daughter of Mufanadzo. When Nyadzanga leaves home for school, Musandiwa wants to go along. At school Musandiwa sits next to her in the classroom. Later she joins the Sub-Standard A class. For a whole year Musandiwa attends school without being registered, but she registers the following year. She is intelligent and passes all the standards without difficulty. When she is about to write her Standard 6 examinations, her father influenced by Mufanadzo and Maswoliedza, forces her to accept a man he has chosen as her husband.

Musandiwa declines as she still wants to further her studies. As a result, Musandiwa is abandoned by her father, and she goes to stay with her grandmother, Mutshinye, at Tshilavulu. Liwalaga arrives at Mutshinye's home after some time. He forces Musandiwa to go back home by beating her severely. This lands him in gaol and he is sentenced to six months hard labour without the option of a fine. Negumela, Musandiwa's principal at school, helps her through all her difficulties. After passing Standard 6, she receives a bursary to help her further her studies. She passes Standard 10 and enrolls as a student nurse without any help from her father. After completing her training, she is appointed as a staff nurse in charge of a clinic at Mulongodi. Her elder step-sister, Nyadzanga, who is by then a married woman, is evicted from her home by her husband. Liwalaga's son-in-law frequents his home to demand the repayment of 'thundu'¹⁾ paid towards Nyadzanga. Liwalaga is old and unemployed and he therefore does not have any money to pay back his son-in-law. He goes to Musandiwa and requests her to help him pay back the money. Musandiwa accepts the request with pleasure and gives her father the money to pay back Nyadzanga's former husband. She asks her father not to refund the money. Liwalaga tells Musandiwa how Maswoliedza and Mufanadzo misled him in what he had done to her. Musandiwa stays with Nyadzanga, and after some time marries Malondi, Negumela's son. The message brought out by the author in this novel, is to discourage parents from preventing their children from attending school.

1.2.3 *Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

Muthukhuthukhu is a teacher. His friend Ragavhu is principal of a primary school. Ragavhu invites Muthukhuthukhu to join him at his school as an assistant teacher. Both are drunkards.

1) Bride-price paid by the family of the man to the family of the woman to render a marriage legally effective.

Muthukhuthukhu neglects his duties in the teaching profession. Ragavhu on the other hand is promoted to the position of inspector of schools. Together they devise a plan whereby Muthukhuthukhu can replace Ragavhu as principal of the school. They bribe the members of the school committee to achieve their objective. Ragavhu acts as a mediator between Muthukhuthukhu and the members of the school committee.

When Muthukhuthukhu fails to be appointed principal of the school, he makes matters difficult for the appointed principal at the school. The community and the inspectorate are not happy with his behaviour, and as a result he resigns. When he applies for new appointments in urban and rural areas, his applications are turned down. After some time he applies for a business licence and manages to get one. Muthukhuthukhu opens a dry-cleaning depot and is later elected member of parliament in the government of that territory. The theme in this novel is to discourage irresponsible teachers from using bribes to attain high positions in the teaching profession. I deem it important to investigate the narrative techniques which Maumela employs to depict his life-situation themes.

The particular narrative techniques that Maumela employs to convey his themes to his readers will be discussed in chapters 3, 4 and 5, with specific reference to the three selected novels.

1.3 Scope and composition of chapters

In the chapters that follow, I shall examine how Maumela has used these particular narrative techniques to convey his themes to the readers. Chapter two deals with a theoretical framework within which this research is done. Point of view in Maumela's novels will be discussed in chapter three. I shall only investigate the third person's point of view because all his novels are of this type.

The fourth chapter deals with the portrayal of characters. I shall be examining the techniques used by Maumela to shape his characters. I am not concerned with the type of characters found in the narratives, but with how they are depicted.

Chapter five is devoted to the organization of material in Maumela's novels. Here, in this section I do not refer to the plot of the novels, but to the techniques employed to bring about the structure of the plot. We know very well that plot is made up of events - I shall therefore examine how Maumela has arranged the events in his novels to build up a convincing plot.

In the last chapter I shall evaluate the use of all the above named techniques and show the success or failure of the author in using them in the selected novels.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

This chapter will provide a theoretical framework within which the analysis will be done.

2.1 Narrative technique as a component of literary art

A narrative is a form of discourse, the principal purpose of which is to relate an event or series of events. Prince (1982 : 1) defines a narrative as

.... the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence.

Roland Barthes, cited by Prince (1982 : 1) says

.... narrative is present in myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories, epics, history, tragedy, *drame* (suspense drama), comedy, pantomime, paintings, (in Santa Ursula by Carpaccio for instance), stained-glass windows, movies, local news, conversation.

According to Barthes, narrative started with the history of mankind. A narrative can therefore be oral or written. This study is focused on the techniques of a written narrative. A written narrative usually involves description as part of the action, but dialogue should also be added to description as part of the narrative. In a narrative there should be a narrator who is the original source of the story. The narrated information is intended mainly for the readers or the hearers, and in our case, the narrated information is mainly for the readers.

The term 'technique' refers to the means by which the writer explores his subject matter, that is what he says and how he says it. There are a number of devices whereby a writer can explore his

subject matter. Any device used by the author to shape his material, is his technique; viz, the choice and arrangement of words, the organization of material, the handling of characters, or the choice of the communicator and his means of communication.

Mark Schorer, cited by Scholes (1961 : 141) says

When we speak of technique, then we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is the subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject of conveying its meaning, and finally of evaluating it.

Technique is one of the most important elements of literature and must not be ignored because it controls the reader's impression in a narrative. Through the effective use of various narrative techniques, the author manages to maintain a balance in the structure of his narrative.

In this study, I shall not discuss all the different techniques used by Maumela to convey the meanings of the subject matter in his narratives. Because of the limited nature of my topic, I shall concentrate on the choice of the communicator and the means of communication (point of view); the handling of characters and the organization of material.

2.2 'Point of view'

In any narrative, a certain point of view is adopted in the presentation of the subject matter. Point of view in this regard is associated with a number of applications. In daily discourse, it is used when one speaks of one's manner of viewing things. It denotes some subjective response to or evaluation of reality. In literature it refers to a narrative technique chosen by the author. Bryant (1978 : 58) says

Point of view does not mean how you feel about the world or what your political connections are or what your opinion on a particular issue is. As used by writers it means who tells the story?

In this study, I shall use point of view in the sense in which it refers to a narrative technique chosen by the author.

There are many techniques which the author can use to outline his theme. Point of view seems to be the basic or determining choice of the other techniques, because they depend on it. This technique refers to the person or narrator through whose eyes readers observe the characters and actions in the story. It also refers to the position from which the narrator views the action, whether he is detached or involved, inside or outside.

Abrams (1981 : 142) says

Point of view signifies the way a story gets told - the mode or perspective established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, setting and events which constitutes the narrative in a work of fiction.

Susan Sniader Lanser (1981 : 13 - 14) says

At the very least, the notion of point of view subsumes those aspects of narrative structure that concern the mode of presenting and representing speech, perception and event; the identities of those who speak and perceive their relationship with one another and with the recipients of their discourses, their attitudes, statuses, personalities and beliefs.

From the above definition of point of view, readers will notice that the attitude they develop in a narrative towards the events presented, and their understanding of those events, is controlled by the author through his technical management of point of view.

It is therefore clear that point of view is not just the relationship between the teller and the tale; its main function is to control the reader's impression of everything in a narrative.

On the other hand, the unity of a passage depends largely on the narrator's position. Beauchamp (1969 : 44) says

In fact, the overall meaning or the theme of the story or novel exists only in the unity of subject matter and narrator.

From the above discussion it is evident that point of view is regarded as the determining factor in the choice of the other devices. Theme, characters, setting, etc. are determined by this technique.

Narrative point of view can be divided into various types. In my division of the various types of points of view, I shall make use of the personal pronouns to categorise them. Wymer (1978 : 56) says

Because point of view concerns the question of what person is telling the story, it has become customary to divide the possible choices into broad categories according to the classifications provided by the personal pronouns.

Point of view can therefore be divided as follows:

1. First person point of view (participant)

- (i) Narrator as a main character
- (ii) Narrator as a minor character

2. Third person point of view (non-participant)

- (i) Omniscient point of view
- (ii) Limited omniscient point of view
- (iii) Dramatic point of view

2.2.1 *First person point of view*

In the division of point of view, I have considered the position from which we see the action and characters of a story. In the

first person point of view, the narrator in the story is a participant. The narrator refers to himself as 'I', e.g.

Nga hetsho tshifhinga *nne* *ndo* vha *ndo* sokou kotamela fhasi, mbilu yo takalela helia *la* Ngovhela le vha *do* li amba. *Ndo* vha *ndo* no dinalea *ndi* tshi ri khamusi *ndi* zwa u *do* humanya lene lo duvha. (Magwabeni 1983 : 10).

(At that time *I* was facing down, and *I* was interested in what she said about Ngovhela. *I* was worried because *I* thought she would be returning home the same day.)

The italicised words show that the narrator who is narrating this passage is the first person who is participating in the story. He tells a story of his personal experience.

What we should take note of, is that the first person narrator is not the author, because if he were, the work would not be fiction, but an autobiography. First person point of view is usually used by authors for fictionalised travel narratives, and also where the author wants to present a highly self-conscious and introspective character.

Sometimes the narrator in a narrative is a protagonist telling his own story. This will give us the greatest possible sense of involvement because he will be directly engaged in the progression of the plot since he himself will be a character in the story. By doing so, the story is dramatised. The narrator in the first person point of view can also be a witness narrator who gives an objective description of the protagonist, which he cannot do himself. He cannot enter into the mind of the hero, or criticise him or comment on the characters and the action as is the case with the omniscient narrator.

First person point of view is not used in Maumela's novels. There are actually few African authors who use first person point of view in their novels. Botha (1984 : 112) says

It is a well-known fact that the technique of the first person narrator is not very commonly used by Black authors.

He further says that Ngcongwane points out the fact that African authors give preference to the technique of the omniscient narrator since this technique corresponds in many respects to the traditional *inganekwane* (folktales), where the hearer listens to the voice of the narrator in a more passive way. In Venda literature, Magwabeni in his *ZWI DO FHELA NGANI*, uses the first person point of view with the protagonist narrating his story. Madima, in his *MMANGA MAWELELE!*, uses the first person point of view with a minor character narrating the story. There is no other Venda novelist to date who uses the first person point of view in narrating stories. No further mention will be made of this technique in our study since Maumela does not use it.

2.2.2 *Third person point of view*

In the third person point of view, the personal pronouns 'he, she, it, they' are used because the narrator is not participating in the action, e.g.

*Vha tshi vhona vha tshi vho sendela tsini-tsini na vha*la
vhatannga, *vha fhumula vha si tsha amba tshithu, tshavho ha*
vha u futelela u tshimbila, mitsindo ya nayo i yone i pfalaho.
(Maumela 1976 : 6).

(When *they* noticed that they were approaching those boys, *they* kept quiet, and kept on walking, only the sound of footsteps was heard).

The italicised words indicate the third person narrator. This shows that the narrator is outside the action. He exists outside the story, and reports various kinds of events, internal or external. Almost all the authors in Venda literature use this technique to explore their subject matter.

This technique is divided into *omniscient*, *limited omniscient*, and *dramatic* points of view. In the omniscient point of view, the narrator freely relates whatsoever he wishes about the thoughts as well as the deeds of his characters. Perrine (1966 : 183) says

He is free to go wherever he wishes, to peer inside the minds and hearts of his characters at will and tell us what they are thinking or feeling.

Apparently, it is argued that this technique is not popular among modern readers. Grebanier (1960 : 187) maintains that although the narrator knows all, he spoils characterisation by informing us about everything concerning the characters. He further says

The chief limitation of this method is that it too easily tempts the author to step in between us and the characters to inform us about their inner life, when he should make that inner life reveal itself. (Grebanier 1960 : 187).

Readers are not interested in the narrator's report, they prefer to look at it through the eyes of the characters themselves.

When the narrator recounts the deeds and thoughts of the characters, but does not judge, we talk of *neutral omniscience*, but when he recounts the deeds and thoughts of, and finally judges the characters, the method is known as *editorial omniscience*.

Limited omniscience is the technique whereby readers see all the action, the events, and all the characters through the eyes of a single character. The narrator is present, but the view point is that of the character. Surmelian (1968 : 57) says

The method is like writing a first person story in the third person, changing 'I' to 'he' or 'she' and the point of view is half external, half internal, with the author as narrator and character as seer.

This point of view is referred to as the stream-of-consciousness. Most African authors do not use this technique in their narratives. Ngcongwane (1984 : 103) says about this technique:

A strange narrative technique, which to my mind is too meaningless to can be used (sic) in our Black languages is called 'the stream of consciousness'.

Similar to Zulu literature, the authors of Venda novels do not use the stream of consciousness technique.

The last but most important type of point of view is the *dramatic*. Wright (1982 : 76) says

In the dramatic method the words, themselves part of what is represented, lie within the action, so to speak, speech that the characters themselves utter as they act.

In this technique the narrator steps aside. The narration is dominated by showing. The information available to the readers is limited largely to what the characters do and say. The function of the narrator is to objectively report the actions of his characters to indicate to the readers their motives and their emotional states as the story progresses. Surmelian (1968 : 65) says about the narrator

He can tell what is happening anywhere to anyone and give all the information the reader needs about the past and the present of the characters.

He further says that the narrator can describe his people and the setting, he can write summaries, and do everything except tell the readers what a character thinks, what he is like inside, and what he himself as a narrator feels about what happens.

By using this technique, the narrator builds up the plot and the meaning around the characters' dialogue. The readers listen to no one but the characters. This is the most objective technique because the narrator has no power to intrude in the development of the story.

An author need not necessarily adopt only one point of view. Some authors adroitly and successfully employ a *mélange* of techniques. Surmelian (1968 : 88) says

It should be clear by now that there is no one best point of view. It is good or bad, and better or worse, according to the particular subject, and what may be good for one story, or writer, may be bad for another.

Point of view is valuable in narrative fiction because it influences all the other elements of a narrative, viz characterization, plot, theme, subject matter and setting. The method of narration has to point out the meaning of the tale as well as individual incidents in it. Through a well-employed point of view, readers can easily detect the meaning of the narrative, and they should also be able to follow the plot progression. Point of view determines the extent to which readers become intimately involved in the action of the story.

2.3 Character portrayal

Characters in narratives are not real people whom we meet everyday in our life situation, but a construction of words meant to express an idea or view of experience. Wymer (1978 : 33) says

The characters of a story are imaginary persons, whether humans, androids, or aliens from a remote galaxy, who perform the actions that constitutes the plot.

The characters in a narrative fiction carry out the action. Readers are able to follow the theme of the narrative because of the action presented by the characters. It is impossible to have action without characters. It is therefore of vital importance for us to study the techniques of characterization.

In reading prose fiction, the readers concentrate on the means (technique) which an author uses to shape the personality of his fictional characters. The traits, feelings and thoughts of characters can be presented by the author either by an Expository or by a Dramatic technique or by making use of the Name-giving technique.

2.3.1 *Expository technique*

The author here communicates the traits, feelings and thoughts of characters by using physical descriptions, or by what other characters say. Scholes and Kellogg, cited by Serudu (1979 : 13) say this technique is the 'direct narrative statement'. According to Altenbernd and Lewis (1966 : 56)

The expository method of characterization tells us about the figure: he is described or discussed either by the author or another character.

In some instances, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe and evaluate the motives and dispositional qualities of his characters. This can be done in the space of a paragraph. Readers and critics consider this technique as being rather outdated because there is no action in the narrative which helps the readers to participate.

Another scholar, Krog (1966 : 30) says the following:

Readers today do not like a long description of your hero and heroine. They do want a few salient points brought out so that the characters have an individuality but they are far more interested in getting into the mind of the character than spending time on what he or she looks like.

Most African authors use this technique as it goes hand in hand with the omniscient point of view.

2.3.2 *Dramatic technique*

Dramatic technique is the means whereby an author merely presents his characters, leaving them to do the talking and the acting. The readers will infer what kind of person the character is from what he does, what he says and what he thinks. Serudu (1979 : 13) describes this technique as follows:

It is from what they say, their behaviour, their thoughts and attitudes, as well as their relationships with other characters that we can judge their personalities.

The use of the dramatic technique in a narrative is interesting for the readers because in a way it allows them to participate in the narrative. The readers are able to know much more about the character than in a straightforward explanation by the author.

Dramatic technique is the most effective method available to authors for character delineation. Although it is regarded as the most effective method, it cannot exist alone; it must be supplemented by the use of the expository technique. If it is not supplemented by the use of the expository technique, the narrative will acquire the characteristics of a drama. An author who wants his narrative to be a success must use a combination of the above-named techniques.

2.3.3 *Name-giving technique*

Name-giving is a technique which is used by authors to reveal the traits of characters. The names which are given to the characters often reveal their actions. Readers are able to associate a character's actions with his name. Wellek & Warren (1973 : 219) indicate that the simplest form of characterization is naming. According to them each 'appellation' is a kind of vivifying, animating and individualising.

Most African authors, including Venda authors, use this technique to reveal the traits of characters. One reason for the popular usage of this technique stems from African culture itself, as Serudu (1979 : 14) points out that

In African communities name-giving is of special significance. In some cases large ceremonies are organised on the day of naming a child. It is also believed that certain names which are given to some individuals may have an influence on their behaviour and personalities.

Although it is customary for African people to have a special day of naming a child, this does not mean that all names given to children during an organised ceremony have an influence on their actions. In a narrative however, the author gives names to his characters intentionally to help reveal their traits.

Maumela uses this technique in some of his novels. For example, names like Matshinyise in ELELWANI, Nyamueni and Musandiwa in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA are used to reveal some of the traits of these characters. We will refer to this point later in chapter 4.

An author who portrays his characters well by intermingling the use of the above mentioned techniques, succeeds in bringing out the theme of his narrative.

2.4 Organization of material

A narrative fiction is made up of events which are brought by the characters' actions. These events help to build up the plot of the narrative. Although it is important to preserve their logical relationship, events in a narrative can be ordered in different ways. Taylor (1981 : 49) indicates that a narrative is not made up of a series of incidents which merely follow one another in time. He further states:

The laws of cause and effect govern their relationship and provide a logical progression. (Taylor 1981 : 49).

This ordering of events is hereafter referred to as the organisation of material.

Readers generally expect an author to organize his material in such a way that the events are ordered chronologically. In actual fact an author rarely narrates his action in a completely chronological manner. Chronological sequences recount events in the order of

their supposed happening according to the conventions of time as measured by a clock. Narrative fiction is not an actual record of what really happened. Events are fictionalised by the author's selection, even if they were once real. Literary events are imaginary, it is not binding that they be ordered chronologically. The importance of a narrative lies in its theme and not in its chronological arrangement of events.

The author can interrupt the chronological sequence of events by using devices such as flashback, suspense and foreshadowing to organise his material.

2.4.1 *Flashback*

Some authors interrupt the chronological sequence of events by going back to fill in the necessary background information. Knott (1973 : 74) says

In many stories or novels, those crucial events that have helped to make your characters what they are may already have taken place. The trouble is that these events are back where you can't get your hands on them easily - and now you need your reader's awareness of them in order to make clear to him what is happening or about to happen in your story.

The solution in this regard is to 'flash' back in time, in other words, to stop the narration and take the readers back along with you. This helps to fill in the exposition in earlier stages of the story. Flashback is defined by Souvage (1965 : 98) as a device by which, through an associative process which breaks up chronological sequence, a given scene is telescoped into a previous scene.

Cohen (1973 : 185) says flashback is

... an interruption of normal chronology and a reversion of events in the past which usually relate to the present.

By using this device the author shifts events about time to focus some attention on some aspects of the plot. For example, if the author wants to make clear to his readers what is happening or about to happen in his story, he can go back in time. This may sometimes be crucial for an understanding of the lead character's motivation.

Flashback is therefore a vital part of the structure of the narrative because it offers insight into the motives of characters and is an extremely important commentary on actions in the present. The author must have some sensible and artistic means of transition to and from the earlier events so that he does not spoil plot progression.

2.4.2 *Suspense*

We can describe suspense as a device whereby an author maintains the interest of his readers in his narrative action. This device thus helps authors make their narratives more effective. Crane, cited by Scholes (1961 : 237) says the plot can be pronounced in terms simply of the variety of incidents it contains and the amount of suspense and surprise it evokes. Suspense can be created by beginning a story at a high point of action or by withholding a sequence of actions in order to arouse the reader's curiosity and participation. Some authors begin their narratives by indicating the outcome of the narration. The missing information can be introduced later to reinforce another action or idea. If the readers know in advance what the outcome of the story is, they can then focus their attention into the how and why of that outcome. Suspense can also be created by delaying the resolution of the crisis. An author can also provide a surprise ending, contrary to the expectations of the readers, by delaying the final resolution. By employing this device, the author captures the readers' interest and arouse their curiosity as to how the story will come out.

2.4.3 *Foreshadowing*

This is a device whereby the outcome of the conflict is anticipated by means such as the speeches of the characters, by brief, small-scale representations of the relationships, or by symbols which hint at the outcome. Souvage (1965 : 87) says foreshadowing may be defined as a plot device based on association in time and through which future (climactic) events and scenes are prepared and anticipated. The effect of foreshadowing is to arouse and heighten suspense. Insignificant events or details of the present are valuable by being indicators of future events. Through the use of foreshadowing, elements in different parts of the narrative are linked. This will help in establishing unity of structure.

From what he has mentioned above, we can see that flashback, suspense and foreshadowing are some of the effective tools that can be used to build up a successful plot in a narrative.

All the narrative techniques outlined above, namely point of view, handling of characters, and the organization of material, are interdependent in conveying the theme or meaning of the story which the author wants to convey to his readers. The neglect of one technique can be detrimental to the efficacy of the other techniques and can result in a bad narration.

CHAPTER 3

POINT OF VIEW IN MAUMELA'S NARRATIVES

Readers are able to understand the meaning of a narrative if plot structure has been well presented by means of a good portrayal of milieu, characters and action. Point of view is very important in this regard.

Point of view, as indicated in the preceding chapter, concerns the angle from which a fictional work is narrated. Knott (1979 : 80) says

The point-of-view is that vantage point from which the writer relates the action of his characters and from which the reader, therefore, is forced to view the proceedings.

An author should decide beforehand whether to use the first person narrator or the third person narrator to deliver his subject matter. Maumela makes use of the third person narrator to explore his subject matter in all his narratives. The different types of point of view were discussed in the preceding chapter and will therefore not be repeated here. In this chapter, I shall focus specifically on the use of the omniscient and the dramatic points of view in ELELWANI, MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA and NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU respectively.

3.1 Omniscient point of view in Maumela's narratives

The expositions in most of Maumela's narratives consist of a vivid description of the setting or the physical appearance of a character. The author uses the narrator to introduce the setting and the characters the readers will encounter in the narratives. The narrator thus provides the readers with a detailed word-painting of locale to make them view it in their minds. This technique of presenting locale and characters by means of description is known as the *omniscient point of view*. This particular technique will now be examined in each of the selected novels.

3.1.1 *Elelwani*

This novel is dominated by descriptions and explanations of setting and the physical appearances of characters.

In using omniscient point of view to depict setting, Maumela does not hesitate to stop the progression of events at any point in the narrative and give a leisurely, quite detailed word-painting of the locale. In *ELELWANI*, the narrator describes *khosi* Ratshihule's *musanda*¹⁾ as follows:

Mudi wa luteto: wo hula u tshi ya hangei kule, ngeno wo tangana wothe nga luhura lwe lwa fhandwa nga mukoto wa u dzhena mudini. Luvhande lwa khoro lwo sielewa ngomu. Khoroni nga fhalala thungo ha vha na miumo mivhili i re tsini na tsini, i tshi ya matavhini ya mbo di tangana tsha vha tshithu tshithihi. Nga fhasi hayo ha vha na matombo a si gathi e e telele, a zwidzulo zwa vhakalaha vha khoro. Vhukati ha khoro na zwiṭanga zwe zwa furaḽela khoro ho ima tshivhambo. U ngeno khoroni, musanda hu hangei bvungwi ha mudi wothe. Zwaho hu tshi tou vhoneḽa thodzi dza mafasho na tḽanga ya pfamo fhedzi. (Maumela 1976 : 17).

(A village which spreads over a wide area, whereas it is surrounded by a fence which gives way for a footpath entering it. Within the *khoro*²⁾ there is an open space, at one side there are banyan trees whose branches are intertwined. Under these trees there are a few stones which are used as chairs by the old men of the *khoro*. Between the *khoro* and the kitchen huts stands a *tshivhambo*³⁾). When one is in the *khoro*, the *khosi*'s huts are deeper into the village. Only the tops of the huts and the roof of the *khosi*'s *pfamo*⁴⁾ can be seen.

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- 1) The *khosi*'s residence
 - 2) The meeting place for the council men.
 - 3) It is the hut in which female initiations are held. This noun is derived from the verb stem - *vhamba*, stretch.
 - 4) It is a hut in which the *khosi* sleeps. The noun *pfamo* has been derived from the verb stem -*fama*, sleep, according to the *musanda* terminology.

The *musanda* described above, is typical of a *khosi's* home. Through the narrator, the author informs the readers directly about what is found in any *musanda* in Venda so that they are in a position to visualise Ratshihule's *musanda*. The description itself is rather long. The narrator tends to bore the readers by interrupting the progression of events with this lengthy description of the setting.

The narrator further shows the author's use of description to reveal setting by describing the position of the dam found in the Khodolelwe river where Thambatshira, Nemavhulani's daughter drowns. The narrator says the following:

Nga fhasi ha dambuwo la hone ho vha hu na tivha lihuluhulu, litswu-litswu li sa ofhisi zwone muthu a tshi li lavhelesa. Khunzikhunzini dzalo ho mela madzhesi na thanga, zwiwe zwazwo zwo tou ita na u kwatamela ngomu. He ha vha hu tshi fhufhelwa ngomu ngaho, hu hone he ha tswuka, madzhesi a tshi vhone o kandedzwa. Ndi lone tivha line vha do musu vho no fhedza u kuvha, vha do bambela ngomu, li imiwa nga thungo ya dasi, ya ntha muthu a tshi swatimela a sa athu na u vhuya a itani u kanda fhasi. Khovhe ngomu halo hu khadzo. (Mauwela 1976 : 22).

(Below the washing place (in the river) there was a big dam, which was deep-black in colour and very fearful to look at. On its banks there were *madzhesi* and reeds, some of them bending towards the water. The spot through which the swimmers used to get into the dam was soiled and the *madzhesi* trampled. This is the dam in which when they had finished washing, they would swim. The lower part of it is used because the upper part is too shallow. There were many fishes inside.)

The description of the dam is not really necessary in this novel, whereas the description of Ratshihule's *musanda* is necessary because it provides the setting which helps develop the action. Unlike the description of Ratshihule's *musanda*, the narrator need only have mentioned what happened in the dam without going into details about the setting because it does not make a direct contribution towards the development of the action. This passage suggests that the author has a tendency to describe settings which are not necessary in his novels.

With regard to characterization, he uses descriptions and explanations to reveal traits of the characters. Through the omniscient point of view, Elelwani is described as

Musidzana wa phaphathe vhukuma, wa tshiimo tsho linganelaho zwavhudi tsho tswititi, e si mulapfu ngeno a songo pfufhifhala. E mutswuku vhukuma a sa vhuyi a vhudziswa. Lukanda lutete-tete lwo tou thaho hothe, uri ndi lwa tshisadzi zwi sa vhuyi zwa hangisa. Khofheni ho daho zwavhudi ha marama o dalaho na thaha dzo linganelaho zwavhudi. Mafo muhulu a tsie ndapfu. Ningo ya nga i no todou nga i a lapfi zwituku. Mulomo wo dzulaho na u linganela zwavhudi, wa meme dzi ngaho dzo tou tshetshelwa sa dza tshitemba, u dzulaho wo mumana arali u sa ambi kana u sea. (Maumela 1976 : 1).

(A girl who is well-built, of normal height, she is not tall, neither is she short. That she is light in complexion is unquestionable. Her skin is smooth, and is obviously a woman's skin. Her face is also well-built, with proportionate eye-lashes. The nose is slightly long. The mouth is also proportionate, while the lips are as well-formed as those of a calabash and are always closed except when she speaks or laughs.)

By describing Elelwani's physical features, the narrator shows the readers that she is beautiful. Elelwani's beauty helps develop the plot because Vele, who becomes the tritagonist after being attracted to this beauty, intensifies the conflict in this narrative. Throughout the novel, he insists on marrying her even though she is already in Ratshihule's hands. In this regard Elelwani's beauty helps the author to develop his theme.

However, the narrator's description of Elelwani's physical appearance is rather long. This can partly be attributed to the unnecessary use of words. For example, the readers are told that Elelwani is of a normal height, and in addition that she is not tall, neither is she short. Had the author avoided this tendency to use many words to express one idea, his description of the physical appearance of the characters would be shorter. Furthermore, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, readers' tastes have changed and nowadays there seems to be a 'reader-resistance' to lengthy character descriptions. I would like to repeat the point that Krog (1966 : 30) makes in this regard:

Readers today do not like a long description of your hero and heroine. They do want a few salient points brought out so that the characters have an individuality but they are far more interested in getting into the mind of a character than spending time on what he or she looks like.

There are a few instances where short explanations and descriptions of the traits of characters are provided. Mutshekwa, Elelwani's friend, is explained as follows:

Khonani ya Elelwani ya mbiluni vhukuma, o vha e Mutshekwa wa Vho-Ndileni. Nga tshiimo vha tshi edana, ene fhedzi a na muvhili u fhira Elelwani. Nga mabeboni Elelwani e muhulwane khae nga gole lithihi. Naho nga tshivhumbeo o vha a sa faedzwi na Elelwani, o vha o di naka. Kha vhudele zwi zwithihi. (Maumela 1976 : 4).

(Elelwani's best friend was Mutshekwa, daughter of Ndileni. They were of the same height, but she was bolder than Elelwani. Elelwani was a year older than her. Even if her beauty was not comparable to Elelwani's, she was also beautiful. When it came to neatness, they were both neat.)

From the above given examples of the description of the physical features of characters, one comes to the conclusion that the author uses long descriptions to reveal the traits of main characters and short descriptions to reveal the traits of the minor characters. Elelwani is the protagonist and Mutshekwa is a minor character in this novel.

According to present-day standards, a less detailed description of the physical appearance of the character would be more attractive to the readers.

Through the third person narrator, Maumela is able to describe what is going on inside the minds of his characters. The narrator says about Vele's inner feelings:

U pfa zwenezwo, Vele mbilu ya thoma u divhitha. (Maumela 1976: 8).

(On hearing that, Vele's heart starts beating fast.)

The author wants to reveal that Vele is afraid of proposing marriage to Elelwani. He does not reveal this through Vele's actions. Instead he tells of the quickened beating of the heart which reflects an inner feeling of the character. The narrator further says

Nga mihumbulo a divhudzisa arali na ngoho uyo Vele a hone afho bephani, a do^ndo mu vhudza zwila zwe a vhuya a mu fulufhedzisa, (Maumela 1976 : 28).

(In her thoughts, she asked herself if ever Vele is present at the *bepha* dance, so that he may tell her what he promised,...).

What Elelwani thinks is important because she thinks of Vele who is willing to rescue her from Ratshihule's hands. In this regard, the author could have revealed Elelwani's wishes through what she says rather than explicitly telling the readers what the character thinks. He could make use of a friend, or any other person close to the character, to reveal such thoughts through conversation. Although Elelwani seems to be without a friend at Ratshihule's home, readers could have learned to know her qualities through an intermediary like a friend.

The use of the omniscient point of view in ELELWANI does not only entail a description of setting and the physical appearance of characters; there is also a tendency to recount the deeds and thoughts of the characters and finally to pass judgment. The omniscient point of view becomes editorial. The judgment renders this point of view subjective. The commentary by the narrator conveys the author's attitude which he feels the readers should know. Altenbernd (1966 : 61) says

If the point of view is editorial omniscient, the narrator will comment upon the action by telling its significance and by evaluating the behaviour of the characters.

In using the editorial omniscient point of view, the narrator says

A tshi ralo vuvhili havho vha mbo di bvisa dzikhambana vha vha sumbedza, vha thivhulula vha ukhutha. Ngangoho dza wanala dzi fhedzi. Naho zwo ralo vhatannga vha di amba vha tshi ya phanda. Zwa ngafhi, fola itali lo vha li tshi khou todwa nga nnyi? (Maumela 1976 : 6).

(When he said that the two of them took out their snuff boxes, opened them and shook them. It was true, they were empty. In spite of that, the young men continued talking. Was someone really looking for snuff? It is doubtful.)

From the passage it is clear that the narrator does not approve of the actions of the young men. At the same time the author's attitude is conveyed to the readers and it is expected of the readers to take it as it is. According to the narrator it is doubtful that the young men were actually looking for snuff from the two girls. Through his comment, the narrator spoils the development of action because even if the two boys were looking for something else, he should leave the conclusion to the readers.

The narrator further says

Kha vhafumakadzi vhothe a hu na we musu e mutani a tavhanya u fariswa gungwa sa Elelwani. Vhege yenyoy ya musu a tshi kha di tou bva u talukanya vhafuwi, i sa athu u fhela, la litshiswa mufari walo Vho-Nyambeni la kumedzwa ene. Ri do ri ndi u nakesa hawe he ha itisa nga u ralo (Maumela 1954:27).

(Not one of the women in the household was ever allowed to hold the *gungwa*¹) as quickly as Elelwani was. Before the end of the week which she was shown her husband, the *gungwa* was taken from Nyambeni, the rightful holder, and handed over to her. We can say it was because of her beauty that it happened like that.)

Since the *khosi* is expected to marry more than one wife, Venda custom stipulates that his wives take turns in being responsible for the *khosi's pfamo* and the *khosi* himself, and this should be decided by the senior wife. Ratshihule acts contrary to Venda custom in allowing Elelwani to be responsible for his *pfamo* in

1) A container used by the *khosi* to drink beer.

place of Nyambeni. The narrator spoils the development of action by explicitly indicating that Ratshihule is influenced by Elelwani's beauty. Readers are thus forced to accept that Elelwani's beauty is the source of conflict. The readers might otherwise have come to a different evaluation of the action of the *khosi* if the comment was not supplied by the narrator.

A character's picture should not be built by the narrator's commentary. If the narrator does this, it indicates that the author has failed to convey his message through the characters. The narrator is expected to tell the story and let the readers draw their own conclusions.

The editorial omniscient point of view makes a narrative less interesting because readers are not given the opportunity to come to their own conclusions about the events which help the action evolve. Moreover, the author does not develop his theme successfully because he explicitly tells the readers how to interpret the story. Maumela, to a certain extent, spoils the delivery of his message to the readers in ELELWANI by including some unnecessary comments by the narrator in the process of story telling.

3.1.2 *Musandiwa na khotsi Vho-Liwalaga*

As in ELELWANI, the author uses the omniscient point of view in this novel to reveal the setting as part of the exposition. The narrator describes Liwalaga's homestead as follows:

Vhutambo vhuhulu ha vhana vha muvhundu wa Mulelema ndi fhasi ha muri wa mutshikili u re tsini na mudzi wa Vho-Liwalaga khotsi a Musandiwa, kusidzanyana kwa minwaha mitanu. Zwino ndila heyi i no dzhena hafha mudini wa Vho-Liwalaga i fhiranga henefha tsini na liri heli line vhana vha tamba nga fhasi halo. (Maumela 1968 : 1).

(The great feast of the children of the Mulelema area is taking place under the *mutshikili* tree, near the homestead of Liwalaga, father of Musandiwa, a little girl of five. The footpath which leads to Liwalaga's homestead passes near the tree under which the children play.)

The author does not depict Liwalaga's homestead, but through the narrator tells the readers about Liwalaga's homestead. He makes use of the footpath and a tree to make his description effective. Although this type of description is appropriate for exposition, the author denies the readers the chance to picture the setting on their own from the actions of the characters.

The description of the setting above is accompanied by the introduction of the main characters, Musandiwa and her father, Liwalaga. The narrator informs the readers directly that Liwalaga is Musandiwa's father. It would perhaps have been more interesting had the author revealed this in a dialogue. Nevertheless, the description of the setting is short and inviting.

On the other hand Musandiwa's grandmother's homestead is described as follows:

Luhura lwawo wothe ndi dirata. Mukoto u bvela vhukovhela-devhula. U bva khawo ndi hone iyi minwe ya zwitentsi i tshi ya henengei kule. Ndi mudi wa nndu tharu nga tshitanga. Tsini na mukoto ndi tshitumba tsha nguluvhe. Nga ngei murahu ha dzinndu hu na mifula mivhili na mufhata wo imaho khoneni ya tshipembe ya luhura. (Maumela 1968 : 32).

(The entire homestead is surrounded by a wire fence. The entrance faces north-west. From this homestead others continue up to the far end. There are three huts including the kitchen hut. There is a pigsty near the entrance. Behind the hut there are two *mifula* trees and a *mufhata* tree on the southern side of the fence.)

The narrator tries to make his description effective by including all clearly visible features of the scene but he thereby interrupts the progression of plot. In this way, the author fails to handle his plot progression adroitly to convey the theme of the novel.

The development of action is less interesting since the author does not reveal setting through what the characters do and say. The interruption also delays the progression of action.

The author once again uses the description of the physical appearances of the characters to reveal some of their traits. It is quite understandable that some such physical features can be well revealed through a description by the narrator, but others can be disclosed through dialogue by other characters. The narrator describes Liwalaga as

Munna murema o ondaho, mulapfunyana, musekene, wa thoho yo itaho matswia, ya dovha ya vha na tshitiko. Wa khofheni husekene hu re na ningo ya tshiberere. Wa mavhudzi a dadasenga, o siaho ndobo afha kha phanda, one a muhulwanenyana o totiwaho zwavhudi nahone a si na tshika. Wa maoto marema a maputu a re na tsie ndapfu. (Maumela 1968 : 13).

(A man who is dark in colour, lean and slightly tall, with a tripod head protruding at its back part. His face is lean and the nose spreads over his face. His hair is thick, clean and well-combed. His eyes are dark with long eye-lashes.)

The narrator makes mention of colour, height, nose, hair and eyes, all of which refer to the physical features of a human being. Even if such features do not contribute to the development of the plot, the author makes it possible for the readers to picture Liwalaga's physical appearance. Besides, the description itself is short.

Nyamueni, Musandiwa's mother is described as

Mufumakadzi mutswukumutambatuwa o imaho mulapfunyana wa khofheni hudanya ha marāma wa muvhilinyana. (Maumela 1968 : 7).

(A woman with a light complexion, tall, with a wide face, and of a medium size.)

Although the author interrupts the progression of events occasionally with his description of the features of the characters, he encourages the readers to know more about the plot progression because these descriptions are short, and without any judgment from the narrator.

3.1.3 *Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

In portraying the setting the author uses character action. With regard to characterisation one rarely find a long description of physical features in this novel. Whenever omniscient point of view is used to depict characters, it is short and without judgment by the narrator. Through the use of omniscient point of view, the narrator describes Muthukhuthukhu as follows:

Vhone muthu vha tshi vbonala vhe munnamudi, mutambatuwa, hone vhannani. Munna wa thoho ya phanda i re na tshitiko tsho itaho mugophi ngeno khofheni hu ho daho zwavhudi. (Maumela 1977 : 4).

(He appears to be a grown man, who is light in complexion. A man with a head the back of which protrudes, while the face is well-built.)

This is the only description of the physical features of a character in this book. It is short and to the point and encourages the readers to read further the progression of events to see how the author presents his theme.

The author does not only restrict the use of the omniscient point of view to achieve his theme, but he has also been neutral in his narrative. One rarely comes across a comment or an evaluation of events. Readers draw their own conclusions from what the characters do and say. Through the use of the neutral omniscient point of view, the author has been successful in depicting his theme. The narrator becomes objective because he does not judge the deeds and thoughts that he recounts. He is felt everywhere, but visible nowhere. However, this does not mean that through his selection and arrangement of events we cannot recognise that he can still manipulate the story in order to demonstrate his point. For instance, consider the short passage below:

Ha ri nga madekwana a wonoyu musi mudini wa Vho-Muthukhuthukhu, vhone Vho-Muthukhuthukhu na Vho-Ragavhu asivha, hu khou endelwa u nwiwa halwa ha tshikhuwa. Vha di vha vhavhili sa maduvha. (Maumela 1977 : 7).

(It happened that on the evening of the same day, at Muthukhuthukhu's home, seated together and drinking beer, were Muthukhuthukhu and Ragavhu. They were the only two, as usual.

In the passage readers get to know that Muthukhuthukhu and Ragavhu are friends. However, the narrator does not tell them this directly. The mere fact that the two men are together as usual, brings the readers again to the conclusion that they are friends and regular drinkers. This neutral position involves the readers in the development of the plot since they have to come up with their own judgment on the events recounted.

The successful use of the neutral omniscient point of view in this narrative is achieved through the author's use of dialogue, as we shall see in 3.2 below.

3.2 Dramatic point of view in Maumela's novels

Cohen (1973 : 18) says that in the dramatic point of view, the author puts his characters in action, building his plot and meaning around their dialogue. The narrator does not have an opportunity to comment, interpret, or enter the character's mind. This device makes for interesting reading. It is the most objective of them all and is dominated by action. Readers are able to follow the development of the plot and theme of the narrative through what the characters do and say. This does not mean it is wholly dramatic; if it were so, the narrative would be a play. We usually find that setting, past events and the physical appearances of characters are described from the omniscient point of view. But such descriptions, ideally are concise and to the point. Readers get the opportunity to draw their own conclusions.

The use of the dramatic point of view is limited in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. These novels are dominated by the use of the omniscient point of view. Readers follow plot progression through narrations. Occasionally the narration is interrupted by dialogue. Although this occurs rarely, it is used to a good effect. In the following three sub-sections I shall examine the use of dramatic point of view in greater detail in the three novels.

3.2.1 *Elelwani*

In ELELWANI it becomes easier to identify the conflict which exists between Elelwani and her parents because the author makes use of the dramatic point of view to a certain extent. Elelwani is compelled by her parents to marry Ratshihule while she is in love with Vele, who has urged her to elope with him.

Consider, for instance, the following dialogue between Mabaḡa and Elelwani:

(Mabaḡa): ... ngauri ndi kale rine ro vha kumedza inwi, mulovha fhanu, ndi hone vhona Vhamusanda vha tshi mmbudza zwauri vha khou dilugisela u ḡa u ni vhang.

(Elelwani): Zwino vha mmbudza uri nḡe ndi ite hani?

(Mabaḡa): Uri ni dzule no dilugisa.
(Maumela 1976 : 10 - 11)

(Mabaḡa): ... because it is a long time since I gave you to him, the *khosi* was here yesterday, and he told me he is preparing to come and fetch you.

(Elelwani): So, what do you expect me to do?

(Mabaḡa): That you must be prepared.

This conflict between the parents and their daughter is clearly revealed through Elelwani's response when she says

Nna hufha ndo di vha vhudza na kale zwa uri thi vha funi havho Vho-Ratshihule vhane vha khou nkombetshedza khavho. Tho ngo vhuya nda vha dzumbela na izwo kaleni. Aredi-ha, yeneyi thundu ya vhathu ine vha khou la vha le vha tshi i divha. (Maumela 197 : 11)

(I told you long ago that I do not love Ratshihule, whom you are forcing me to marry. From the beginning I never concealed this. Be careful about this *thundu* you are squandering.)

Even though her parents have already accepted *thundu* from Ratshihule, the dialogue shows that Elelwani will not easily give in to her parents' demands. This dialogue shows that parents should not decide their children's future, as was the custom in the past. To emphasise this the author makes use of a traditionbound old man who does not want to dance to his child's tune. To make the conflict tense, Mabaḡa continues to say:

.... kha do litsha u ya ha Vho-Ratshihule a tshale onoyo mutukana aṇe a vha mbiluni, ndi do mbo di ya nda mu runga nga pfumo. Tshavhungwe! Thi vhuswi nga ṇwana we nda tou beba. (Maumela 1976 : 11)

Let her refuse to marry Ratshihule and elope with the boy she desires. I will go there and stab her with a spear. I cannot be controlled by my own child.)

The dialogue between the father and the daughter develops the plot progression and it helps depict the theme of the narrative, because both characters do not want to listen to what the other says. Elelwani is determined not to marry Ratshihule, on the other hand, her father reveals his determination in this conflict by indicating that he is prepared to kill her. From the dialogue above, readers easily realise that Elelwani is a girl who believes in the freedom of choice, and Mabaḡa is a man who sticks to the Venda custom. With regard to the Venda custom, Makhado (1980 : 87) says the following:

According to customs and traditions of the Vhavenda, as already stated when some of the novels were treated, the pairing of children is the responsibility of their parents.

Vele insists that Elelwani elopes with him. He says

... ntaheleni, ha ri vhusiku honoho, ri mbo di namela rothe ri ye makhuwani. (Maumela 1976 : 12)

(... elope with me, during the same night, we must migrate to an urban area.)

Elelwani replies:

Hafhu kha ri ri ndi a ralo nda ni tahela, nda sokou welwa nga khombo zwenezwo ndi na inwi, ni do ntsuma ha nnyi? Ii, Vele, kha ri zwi litshe, ndi khou zwi vhona a zwi nga shumi. (Maumela 1976 : 12 - 13)

(Suppose after I have eloped with you, some misfortune befalls me while we are still together, whom are you going to inform about such an accident? Let us not do this, let us leave this altogether, it won't work.)

This dialogue shows that there is a misunderstanding between Elelwani and Vele. Even though she loves Vele, she will not elope with him without the blessing from her parents. The rejection of Vele's advice helps develop the plot of the narrative in this regard. What Elelwani tells Vele is typical of Venda children who grow up according to the traditional customs. They respect their parents and do things which are acceptable to them. Elelwani's character does not make her ready to elope with Vele. This means that through what she says she is bound to give in to her parents' wishes with regard to Ratshihule. Besides, readers are able to identify some of her traits. Her action does not resolve the conflict, but instead develops it to bring out the theme.

While the author has used the dramatic technique sparingly, there is no doubt that where he applies it he achieves a degree of success in developing the theme of ELELWANI.

3.2.2 *Musandiwa Na Khotsi Vho-Liwalaga*

As I have already indicated, this narrative is dominated by the narration and explanations of events, settings and characters, but this does not mean that the dramatic point of view has been totally neglected. The author also uses the dramatic point of view to reveal the plot progression and some of the qualities of the characters. In one instance, Liwalaga says

Mara fosamuthaimi a nga di sala. Hu u lila hawe hu do vhuya ha mu netisa a fhumula. (Maumela 1968 : 12)

(But for a while she may remain here. Regarding her weeping she will grow tired of it and be silent.)

The use of the words 'mara' from Afrikaans 'maar' and 'fosamuthaimi' from English 'for some times' reveals Liwalaga's use of language. Readers conclude that he may have been a migrant labourer, working with Whites. They need not be told that Liwalaga had contact with Whites, they deduce it from what he says.

While this technique has been applied sparingly, it is used successfully to show the conflict between Musandiwa and her father Liwalaga. Liwalaga pleads with Musandiwa to accept Mafanedza as her husband. Musandiwa replies:

... havho vhathu kha vha vha landule, vha vha vhudze uri ula n'wana u ri ha funi. Nahone ndi tshee mutuku. (Maumela : 1968 : 30)

(... reject that proposal and tell them that I do not love them. You can see that I am still too young to marry.)

Liwalaga tells her:

Nne ndi khou zwi takalela uri zwo vha zwi tshi do thusa nne kha tsiku yanu, nne wanga mushumo wa do tou vha wa u ni badelela tshikolo. Arali zwa sa ralo nne ndi nga si do zwi tutusa zwa u ni dzhenisa tshikolo. (Maumela 1968 : 30)

(I like this arrangement because it will help me in that he will buy you clothes and I will pay your fees at school. If you don't do as I tell you, I will not manage to pay your fees at school.)

The cause of the conflict between Musandiwa and her father is revealed in what they say. Her father forces her to accept Totshayo's son as a husband. She refuses to accept him. Liwalaga continues to say

Ngaure nne havha vhathu ndi khou funa u tshi vha funa, izwo-ha u vho do tou vha funa nga swili. Wa sa vha funa u do tuwa hafhano mudini wanga.

(Because I want you to love these people, I will therefore force you to love them. If you do not love them you will leave my home.)

To maintain the plot progression and the desire of the readers to know more, Liwalaga maintains that she must do as he wishes. The author uses a typical Venda man who believes in selecting a husband on behalf of his daughter, and a modern girl who does not want to be given a husband. Liwalaga emphasises his point by evicting Musandiwa. After a long period during which she stays with her grandmother, she comes to tell her father that she has passed the standard 10 examinations. While Musandiwa is telling him what she has come for, he intervenes and says

Haya mafhungo ha vhudzwi nne. Iyani ni yo vhudza khotsi anu muswa Netshiungani na munna wanu Negumela hafhu. (Maumela 1968 : 80)

(Do not tell me this, go and tell your new father Netshiungani and your husband Negumela.)

From what he says readers realise that the conflict is not yet resolved. Musandiwa and Liwalaga are still at loggerheads because she does not want to accept Mafanedza. Liwalaga does not want to see her, hence the progression of plot.

Through the use of the dramatic point of view, the author has successfully revealed the differences between the tradition-bound people and the younger generation, which help to reveal the theme of this narrative.

3.2.3 *Ndi-Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is full of dialogue. Readers follow the development of the theme through what the characters do and say.

Unlike in the other two novels discussed, exposition here is through the dramatic point of view. The author manages the portrayal of characters, setting and plot progression through dialogue. Let us take some examples from the novel to demonstrate the use of the dramatic point of view. Ragavhu tells Mukhetho:

Vhunga zwino ro no tendelana kha haya mafhungo, kha vha fare zwavho ndivhuho thukhuthukhu i no bva kha Vho-Muthukhuthukhu asiya. (Maumela 1977 : 16)

(Now, since we have come to an agreement about this matter, accept this as a sign of gratitude from Muthukhuthukhu.)

Ragavhu offers Mukhetho, the chairman of the school committee, a bribe from Muthukhuthukhu to have him appointed principal of the school. This is not proper behaviour for a school principal who is to take up the position of an inspector soon. Ragavhu, as a man of authority, should be discouraging bribery in educational affairs. Through what Ragavhu does and says, readers are convinced that he is an immoral character, a man who is not fit to be entrusted with the responsibility commensurate with an inspector of schools.

Ragavhu further reveals his influence on the members of the school committee by choosing a teacher to succeed him as principal of the school. He says

Kha havha vhadededzi vhavho, mudededzi wavho ane nda nga tama vha tshi nga nanga ene nga a vhe muthu a no do kona u bveledza mushumo, ngeno e muthu wa mbilu mbuya. Zwino o raloho ane nda vhona e ene o fanelaho ndi havha vhonekudze, Vho-Muthukhuthukhu. (Maumela 1977 : 21)

(Among all your teachers, the one whom I should like you to appoint, let him be the one who is able to carry out his duties, a man who can work with people. The person whom I regard as suitable is Muthukhuthukhu.)

The members of the school committee seem ready to accept what Ragavhu says until Ramuneta, one of the members, intervenes and says

Mudzulaphanda, a re nne heli fhungo a thi li tangedzi, ngani ngauri hezwô zwiga zwa hoô mudededzi zwine[^] vha khou dziba ngazwo, hufhani ri tshi sedza fhalâ bulakibodoni ri tshi vhone zwi zwithihi na zwa mudededzi Vho-Raluano, nahone vhenevha Vho-Raluano vho phasa u fhira avha vha no khou pfi hu dzheniswe vhone. Nahone havha muthu a si kale vho thoma u shuma tshikoloni tshino, fhedzi vha re Vho-Raluano ndi kale vha tshi khou shuma fhanô. Zwino-ha zwi tou vha khagala zwauri o teaho tshidulo hetshi a si Vho-Muthukhuthukhu ndi Vho-Raluano. (Maumela 1977 : 21)

(Mr Chairman, I do not accept this, because the qualities required for such an appointment as listed on the blackboard, are those of Raluano. Moreover, he is more qualified than the man who is being recommended. Apart from that, Muthukhuthukhu has only recently started working here, whereas Raluano has been working here for a long time. It is obvious that the one who is suitable for this position is not Muthukhuthukhu, but Raluano.)

Ramuneta is against the idea of appointing Muthukhuthukhu as principal of the school. He shows other members of the school committee who seem to be illiterate, that Raluano is suitable for the principalship. The dialogue between Ragavhu and Ramuneta intensifies the action. Ragavhu favours Muthukhuthukhu, whereas Ramuneta is in favour of Raluano. Ragavhu achieves his aims by using bribes, whereas Ramuneta tries to be realistic, he wants the most suitable person to be appointed. The narrator is completely outside the action. The author manages to unfold the theme by what the secondary characters say about the main characters. Ragavhu and Ramuneta are mere secondary characters whose actions are valuable in this novel.

Muthukhuthukhu is compelled by the new principal, Raluano, to leave his class and take Ragavhu's class. Muthukhuthukhu resists the principal's arrangement and says:

Heyo kilasi ine nda khou fhiwa yone, nne a thi khou i tangedza, ndi do di ya phanda na ye nda[^] kovhelwa yone nga phirisipala o tuwahô. (Maumela 1977 : 31)

(This new class which is being allocated to me, is unacceptable to me. I will go on teaching in the one allocated to me by the former principal.)

Raluano visits Muthukhuthukhu for an inspection of his class to evaluate his work. After learning that Muthukhuthukhu is simply not willing to teach in front of him, he says

Murathu wanga Vho-Muthukhuthukhu, ngoho-ngoho vha khou lamba tshothe u funza avha vhana? (Maumela 1977 : 44)

(My younger brother Muthukhuthukhu, do you really refuse to teach these children?)

Muthukhuthukhu replies:

Nne ndi muthu a sa tshintshiho zwe a amba, zwe nda vha vhudza zwone ndi zwone, a hu na zwiñwe. (Maumela 1977 : 44)

(I am a person who does not alter what he has said. What I told you is true, there is nothing more.)

It is clear from the dialogue that Muthukhuthukhu is younger than Raluano. The conflict in this narrative is successfully depicted by the dialogue between the two characters. However, Muthukhuthukhu reveals himself to be an irresponsible teacher. He has no interest in the education of the children but fights for positions for which he does not qualify. His refusal to teach the children is sufficient evidence of this. He tells the principal that he will never teach the children until his demands are acceded to. Muthukhuthukhu's actions inspire the reader's curiosity to know more about the resolution of the conflict.

Through this dialogue with Muthukhuthukhu, Raluano is portrayed as an authoritarian. He forces Muthukhuthukhu to teach a class which the latter feels he cannot handle. Muthukhuthukhu gives his reasons, and is supported by other teachers, Raluano rejects their advice and says

Ndi tshi ita heyi nzudzanyo a si uri hezwo a tho ngo zwi humbula. Nne mune ndi a divha uri ndi ngani ndo pulana nga u rali, huno, hu fanela u do itwa zwenezwo zwe nda pulana zwone. (Maumela 1977 : 44)

(When I organised this arrangement, I looked into it. I know why I planned it this way, therefore it must be done as I have arranged.)

The author depicts the setting through dialogue. He does not use descriptions as part of his revelation. For instance, Muthukhuthukhu believes that every action which he would like to take must be strengthened by medicine. It is a tendency common to the Venda people. If there is anything which they want to achieve, like attaining high positions they believe that a medicine-man should be visited for a lucky tip. Muthukhuthukhu and Ragavhu decided on approaching a medicine-man for a lucky tip. Muthukhuthukhu further suggests which medicine-man they should visit. He tells Ragavhu:

Maine ane nne nda vhona a tshi kona mafhungo o raliho, ndi mukegulu Vho-Tshivhanu vha^{la} vha Phuseni. (Maumela 1977 : 9)

(The diviner who can help us in this regard is an old woman, Tshivhanu of Phuseni.)

What Muthukhuthukhu says is clearly evidenced among the Venda business and professional people, like teachers. When it comes to the attainment of high positions, they will not hesitate to consult diviners to help them grab those positions. The author does not only show setting through dialogue, he also reveals the period in which the narration unfolds. For instance, Muthukhuthukhu tells Ragavhu:

Ndo mbo di ri u bvela badani, ndi sa athu na u vhuya nda ima tshifhinga tshilapfu nda mbo di wana lifithi ya Vho-Rasilingwane vha Phahwe, vha mbo di fhira vha tshi mposa khoroni ya mudzi wa vhona. (Maumela 1977 : 85)

(I arrived at the main road and after a short period was offered a lift by Rasilingwane of Phahwe, who dropped me at your place.)

This episode shows a new feature of Venda life. In the past people were afraid of cars. They associated them with ritual killing. Today the motor vehicle is an essential part of their daily transport.)

3.3 Comparative assessment of the use of the third person point of view by Maumela

Because the theme is the focal point of the narrative, the point of view from which the story is told can have great thematic importance. In using the third person point of view, Maumela has to a certain extent succeeded in bringing out the meaning and themes of his narratives even if there are some shortcomings in some of the novels. *ELELWANI* and *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA* are dominated by the omniscient point of view. Since this point of view has an influence on the attitude of the readers towards the events presented, the author guides the readers to accept what he believes in, but only if he supplies comments during the progression of events. Even when our author uses the third person point of view only to convey his theme in his novels, he uses it differently. In *ELELWANI* and *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA*, readers know characters, settings and plot progression through descriptions and explanations. Since these aspects help in the depiction of the theme of a narrative, the author fails to convey his theme convincingly because he tells the readers almost everything directly. On the other hand, *NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU* is dominated by the use of the dramatic point of view. Readers get to know characters, settings and plot progression through what the characters do and say. Readers are involved in the progression of plot because they have a desire to know what will happen next. The theme of the narrative is depicted in this regard, rather than told by the narrator.

On the whole, we as readers cannot blame Maumela for the use of the omniscient point of view in *ELELWANI* and *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA* to develop his theme. Theme is the reflection of the human desire to make sense of experience. Maumela grew up during a period in which oral literature was dominant in Venda society. One can conclude that the narration of folktales had an influence on Maumela's way of narrating his stories. Folktales are stories which are told for the sake of amusement. They are regarded as

being dramatic in nature - the narrator captures the audience's attention as she dramatizes by imitating the characters. However, in Venda folktales, descriptions and explanations play a major role during the narration of a folktale. In almost all these folktales, in the exposition, the narrator will go so far as to supply background information by describing the physical features of the characters and setting. The development of the story is revealed by the explanation by the narrator. We therefore come to the conclusion that Maumela's use of the omniscient point of view could be a direct influence of the narratoin of folktales.

At the time of their first publications, the readers of ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA were well-acquainted with the narrative techniques and they enjoyed the narratives, because the narration is not all that different from the narration of the folktales to which they were accustomed. As a result, one would say that at the time, Maumela managed to drive the message home successfully. Present-day readers will talk about themes not portrayed but directly given to the readers by the author. They know nothing about the narration of folktales, except from reading them in literature. They are therefore not interested in the description of characters, settings and explanations of plot progression. For them, Maumela is less successful in bringing out his message in these two novels.

Maumela modified his third person point of view by dominating the naration with the dramatic point of view to make his narration more successful in his later novels. This is evident in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU. The theme in this narrative has been artfully achieved. Present-day readers enjoy this narrative because the technique that is used leaves room for the readers' own interpretations of the events, and it also creates the opportunity for the readers to get involved in the story much more directly. This brings us to the conclusion that setting, characters and the progression of events have been conveyed differently in these three novels.

3.3.1 *Setting*

In ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, the narrators supply the descriptions and explanations of settings to the readers. The dramatic point of view is used to a less extent to depict setting. Setting is therefore not depicted in these narratives because it is supplied directly by the narrator. Readers are not offered the opportunity to establish setting on their own through what the characters do and say. Besides, the description of setting in ELELWANI is rather long. Some readers usually skip over the descriptions to come to the dialogue. This does not encourage the readers to read further. In MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, while the author makes use of the descriptions and explanations of settings, he has shown some improvement because such descriptions are short.

In NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, one rarely finds a description of setting by the narrator. Readers get to know the setting from what the characters do and say. This technique of portraying setting helps to bring out the theme of the novel convincingly. Readers enjoy reading such a narrative because in a way they are participating by looking for setting on their own.

3.3.2 *Characters*

In ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, the author makes use of a combination of the dramatic point of view and the omniscient point of view to portray his characters. Descriptions of physical features and explanations of characters and their traits by the narrator are dominant. In some instances readers get to know a character through what other characters say about him. ELELWANI is characterised by long descriptions of the physical features of the characters; the narrator even goes so far as to tell readers the inner thinking and feelings of the characters.

Although this is successfully done here, the narrator spoils characterization because what a character thinks and feels should reveal itself through action and dialogue. In MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, the use of the physical description of characters, even if found throughout the book, is handled well because the descriptions themselves are short.

Characterization has been well handled in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU. The whole novel is dominated by dialogue, which is a source of delight to the readers. One finds here and there some descriptions of and explanations about characters. Through the dramatic point of view, the author has managed to reveal the traits of his characters. Characterization is important in the development of plot. Good portrayal of plot means success in the revelation of theme. Compared with the two other novels, NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is by far the best in character portrayal in this regard. This shows that the author has been more successful in revealing his theme in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU than in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA.

3.3.3 *Action*

The development of action in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA unfolds mostly through explanation by the narrator. The dramatic point of view has been used to a limited extent, but successfully. Explanation of plot progression renders the narrative less interesting. This affects the depiction of the theme. This explanation shows that the author has failed to use his characters to reveal the action in the novels. Plot is what the characters do and say. According to Abrams (1981), plot must be perceived by the readers as a single, complete and ordered structure of actions directed towards the intended effect. Through the characters' deeds the author manages to show the action which is most significant and most revealing in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU.

Readers follow the plot progression through what characters do and say. This kind of novel makes it easier for readers to identify the theme of the narrative, compared to a novel where the action is revealed through explanations by the narrator.

• On the whole, Maumela has been successful in intermingling the omniscient and the dramatic points of view to develop themes in his narratives.

CHAPTER 4

CHARACTER PORTRAYAL IN MAUMELA'S NOVELS

The discussion in this chapter will be focused on the method of presenting characters in Maumela's novels. Msimang (1983 : 99) defines characterization as

... a sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work of art so that such characters are perceived by the audience/reader as persons endowed with moral and dispositional as well as physical qualities.

Characterization in a novel is important to the student of literature because it has a profound influence on how an author arranges or organises the development of plot. Surmelian (1968 : 140) says this about characters:

... character is the cornerstone of the novel, and we read novels primarily for their revelations of character.

Therefore, techniques used to portray characters are very important since they help to reveal the theme(s) of the narrative. Freud, cited by Serudu (1979 : 10) says

Very often the difference between what is deemed first-rate and second rate in literature lies mainly in the achievement of better characterization. To be classic, a novel must be about people portrayed with insight, who are always credible and in some instances dynamic.

In an author's organization of material, characterization is indispensable for bringing out his themes. It is therefore important to look at Maumela's ability to present his characters in his novels. The main characters and two or three secondary characters in the selected novels will be taken into consideration to examine the techniques used to reveal them. In our study, the techniques used to present characters are classified into expository, dramatic and name-giving technique, each of which will now be examined.

4.1 Expository technique

The expository technique is sometimes referred to as a direct technique since the narrator himself is involved in exposing the traits of characters through physical descriptions and by using other characters to reveal traits of the fictional person in whom he is primarily interested. This method of character portrayal is suitable for revealing the traits of minor characters quickly because a character can then be known in the space of a paragraph. Readers do not want to know much about the traits of minor characters.

Maumela uses this technique to portray the main characters. He makes use of the narrator to describe a character's physical features and to further explain the behaviour of the character. This device tends to deny the readers a chance of participating in the development of plot since everything is given to them.

4.1.1 *Elelwani*

In this section I shall discuss the portrayal of the main characters, namely Elelwani, Vele and Ratshihule. In ELELWANI, the readers come across a long description of *Elelwani's* physical appearance on the third page. It serves as an exposition, but as was indicated in the previous chapter, such a long description is undesirable by present-day literary standards. The narrator may certainly supply the background information about characters, but this should not be too long as it delays and interrupts the plot progression. Surmeliān (1968 : 155) argues that

... the physical description of characters is not as important as it used to be, and many characters like to form their own mental images of what the characters look like, but a brief description-in-movement is always helpful.

Elelwani's beauty is exposed in the introduction by way of explanation. The narrator says of her:

O vha a tshi o ambara o rali, kha vhanna na vhathanga ndi nnyi we a tshi mu vhona a si mu emule? Zwi zwone, u tama tsha mukhuwa hone a si u dzhia-vho.

Kanzhi, vhanzhi vho vha vha tshi u tangana nae vha sokou mu humbela fola ngeno vhe si vhadahi. U ralo hu u shaya tshe vha vha tshi nga amba tshone khae. U ambiswa, a ri ambi, vhege yo vha i sa fheli. Ngoho hwananyana uyu wa vhathu vha matongoni vho vha vho mu vhumba zwavhudi nahone vha tshi zwi funa. (Maumela 1976 : 3 - 4)

(When she was dressed nicely, who amongst men and boys would not like to fall in love with her? It is true, if one admires something, it does not mean that one wants to take it.

Many people on several occasions, on meeting her, would ask for snuff, even if they did not use it. They did this because they did not have anything to say to her. When it came to declarations of love, hardly a week will go by without someone declaring his love for her. Indeed the gods did a wonderful job when they created this young girl.)

The explanation of Elelwani's beauty in this passage is a continuation of the description of her physical features. It becomes long and delays the plot progression.

As one proceeds through ELELWANI, one finds that the author uses the narrator to explain some of the traits of the characters. The author wants to impress upon the readers that Elelwani is a beautiful girl. He thus uses the narrator to explain Elelwani's beauty as follows:

U naka ha hone zwino o no vha mutanuni, ho vha hu tshi nga hu fhira ha zwila a tshee musidzana. Henefha hu no pfi vhañwe vha vhanna, musi ho dzulwa vhu tshi khou nwiwa, vho vha vha tshi ri u mu lavhelesa vha vho hangwa u vho kumela izwo vhafuwi vha tshi nwa, muthu a vho tou phapha nga u do pfa vhañwe vho no vha kha zwivhombo zwa u kumela. (Maumela 1976 : 27)

(She is now more beautiful than before she got married. It is said that some of the men, seated and drinking beer, became distracted after looking at her and forgot to show due respect to the *khosi*, only to be alerted by the others reciting the royal praises.

Since Elelwani's beauty is the source of conflict in the narrative, it is understandable that it is emphasised. However, the author could have developed his theme by employing devices that make him less obtrusive and that render the narration more lively, so to speak. For example, instead of having the narrator inform the readers of how men reacted when they saw Elelwani, the author could have presented a conversation that the men had about Elelwani's beauty and its effect on them.

The expository technique does not only entail the physical description and explanation of some of the traits of characters by the narrator. It also involves other characters giving a direct presentation of the relevant character's traits. Although ELELWANI is dominated by description and explanations by the narrator, the author has also successfully used other characters to reveal, through what they say, the traits of relevant characters. For instance, besides the narrator's description of Elelwani's beauty and youth, we also hear Vele says this to her:

Nahone zwo vha zwi tshi go mmangadza, muthu o raliho sa inwi a tshi dinekedza kha mukalaha o ralaho. Hafhu muthu o raliho sa inwi a tshi malwa nga mukalaha o ralaho ndi a zwi sola. (Maumela 1976 : 8).

(It would shock me, for a girl of your looks, to give herself to such an old man. I condemn any possibility of marriage between a girl like you and such an old man.)

Vele's words and the shock he expresses at the thought of Elelwani marrying an old man reinforces the source of conflict in the narrative.

Elelwani's reasons of refusing to marry Ratshihule stem from the belief in the individual's freedom of choice, irrespective of whether that individual is pretty or ugly. This freedom of choice gives her the right to refuse to marry Ratshihule, on the grounds that she does not love him and that he is too old for her. Her beauty is a source of conflict because it attracts an older man who

has power and authority, i.e. a *khosi*. Surely his status and position flatter the parents and make them more determined to marry her to Ratshihule. This in turn intensifies the conflict with her parents; hence a good development of theme.

Elelwani's boyfriend, *Vele*, is presented to the readers as

Muthannga mulapfunyana o todou ngaho u a tswuka wa tshifhatuwo tshi lavheleseaho, tshi na mato o bvaho, na thaha dza mapango. Mavhudzi matswu-matswu a dzulaho o totiwa a phulwa ndila. Nga vhukaleni Elelwani o vha e mutuku nga makole mavhili kana mararu. (Maumela 1976 : 10)

(A young man who is rather tall and light in complexion with a beautiful face, protruding eyes and long cheeks. His hair is jet black, always combed and parted leaving a path down the head. Elelwani is two or three years younger than Vele.)

This description is short and precise, but it comes at a wrong time because the readers are expecting the progression of events. At a later stage, the narrator supplies a further description of Vele, now known as Matshinyise:

Munna uyu vha tshi mu sedza zwavhudi vha wana uri ndi ngoho vhakoma vha tshi ri ha athu u tou vha munna muhulwane u yafhi, naho zwawe e mulapfunyana mutswuku, wa tshifhatuwo tsho daho zwavhudi na marama o bvaho one o vhumbwa zwavhudi. Thohoni mavhudzi e mahuluhulu. One o totelwa ntha e matswu, a songo penga. Ndebvu dzo litshedzwa dzotha dzi ndapfu-ndapfu. Dza kha dzithaha dzo mela dzi tshi tsa dza yo tangana na dza kha tshitefu. Dzone ndapfu-ha vhukuma dzo tou vhuyaho dzo ralo dzi dza maphongo. Dzone dzo swifhala dze nzwii, na midziro i tshi sala murahu. Thoho yone yo pfi shamu-shamu nga dzithambo dza mivhala mitswuku, mitshena, midala na minwevho ine ra sa vhe na madzina ayo kha lwashu Luvenda. Zwigula na thambo dzenedzi zwo nemelela nga ngeno dzindeveni na kha dzithaha. Huno-ha ha vha na dze dza tou itwa mipakato kha mahada othe, dzone dzo tou fhambana : dza kha shada linwe dzo yela kha lurumbu lwa linwe, dza lia linwe dza da ngeno kha lwa ili. (Maumela 1976 : 48)

(When people looked at this man closely, they found that what *vhakoma* said about him was true, he is middle-aged, tallish, light in complexion, handsome with well-built protruding cheeks. His hair was very long, his face just peeped out through a bush of pitch-black beard. Around his head were ropes of red, white, green and other colours for which our

language (Tshivenda), lacks words. Some ropes were hanging down on both sides of his head, while others were tied like bandoleers over his shoulders across his body, crossing each other.)

From the above passage, the readers will realise that Maumela does not restrict the use of the expository technique to reveal traits of characters in the exposition only. The narrator does not hesitate to stop the progression of plot by interposing explanations or a description of the physical features of characters. At this stage of the narrative, the readers are not particularly interested in reading such descriptions and explanations but are eager to know characters from their actions and what other characters say about them. It would seem that the narrator supplied this description because Vele has changed setting. Even so, the author could have allowed the readers to find this out on their own, and establish whether or not Vele is a convincing Zionist Church priest. Furthermore, the description itself is rather long and the readers may thus feel bored and stop reading the book. If this happens, then the author has failed to convey his message successfully.

As already indicated, the narrator in this novel tends to supply descriptions of the physical features of a character. However, when it comes to the depiction of *Ratshihule*, the narrator deviates from this tendency. He uses other characters to reveal some of Ratshihule's traits. Ratshihule is depicted as an old man who cannot be paired with a young girl such as Elelwani. We learn of Ratshihule's age during the conversation between Vele and Elelwani. On encouraging Elelwani to reject marriage to Ratshihule, Vele says

Nahone zwo vha zwi tshi do mmangadza, muthu o raliho sa inwi a tshi dinekedza kha mukalaha o ralaho. (Maumela 1976 : 8)

(It would shock me, for a girl of your looks to give herself to such an old man.)

The narrator successfully reveals the age of Ratshihule because he does not stop the progression of events and start explaining. While Vele is fueling the conflict between Elelwani and her parents, he is also revealing one of Ratshihule's traits.

4.1.2 *Musandiwa Na Khotsi Vho-Liwalaga*

This novel is full of descriptions of the physical features of the characters, both in the introduction and in the development of plot. The pattern is similar to that in *ELELWANI*. *Liwalaga* is described as

Munna murema o ondaho, mulapfunyana, musekene wa thoho yo itaho matswia, ya dovha ya vha na tshitiko. Wa khofheni husekene hu re na ningo ya tshiberere. Wa mavhudzi a dadasenga a siaho ndobo afha kha phanda, one a mahulwanenyana o totiwahe zwavhudi nahone a si na tshika. Wa mato marema a maputu a re na tsie ndapfu. (Maumela 1968 : 7)

(A black man, lean, on the tall side with a head which looks like a tripod with a protruding back part. His face is long with a big nose. He has receding clean well-combed hair. He has dark eyes with long eye-lashes.)

From what other characters say about *Liwalaga*, we learn that he is a good man, who can easily be swayed by others from his convictions. This is depicted in the conversation between Mutshinye and Muthathedzwa, after *Liwalaga* has evicted Musandiwa from his home. The two cannot believe that *Liwalaga* can do such a thing since he is a good person. Mutshinye tells Muthathedzwa that

Kha vha kundwe vha tshi khou tou funzedzelwa nga musadzi ngauri musadzi wa hone e fha!a u vha haho fhanu, u tou vha thambatshira. (Maumela 1968 : 32)

(He might have been influenced by his wife, because that woman is cruel indeed.)

In support of the above statement, Negumela, after hearing of the eviction of Musandiwa by her father, also does not believe that *Liwalaga* could act that way. He tells Musandiwa

Khotsi anu vho dzhenwa nga muñwe muya we vha vha vhe si nawo na zwiṭuku. (Maumela 1968 : 35)

(Your father has changed from what he used to be in the past.)

Liwalaga's trait in this regard has been well depicted through what other characters say about him.

Nyamueni is exposed as

"Mufumakadzi mutswuku mutambatuwa o imaho, mulapfunyana wa khofheni hudanya ha marama, wa muvhilinyana." (Maumela 1968 : 7)

(A woman who is light in complexion, tallish with a wide face and a thick set body.)

These descriptions of Liwalaga and Nyamueni help the readers to visualize them. As we see later on page 8 in this novel, Nyamueni was so attractive that men could not resist offering her lifts. Her not surprising death in a car accident introduced the main character, Musandiwa, through whom the author develops the plot. This characterization is successful because the short descriptions do not detract the reader's attention from the plot progression.

The author exaggerates the use of the expository technique by supplying new physical details of the same character whenever a new setting arises during the development of plot. In this regard, *Musandiwa* is initially exposed as follows:

Musandiwa nga u vha muthu wa dafu, o vha a si tsha vha kha hetshila tshiimo tsha mahola. Hezwino ho vha ho no tou takuwa kusidzanyana kwo dzingindelaho, kwa muvhili wa zwidenzhe zwi si na mapeta, zwa zwiṭafu zwo tou vhumbedzelwaho zwavhudi. (Maumela 1968 : 21)

(Due to the fact that Musandiwa is growing up quickly, she changed since last year. She is now a well-built little girl with legs without calves.)

When Musandiwa attends school while staying with her grandmother, she is described thus:

Zwino e hafha u vbonala e tshisidzana tsho tou nakaho; tsha kuvhili na zwidenzhe zwa thafu dzo tou vhumbedzelwaho zwavhudi, fhedzi zwinayo zwi zwituku. Mahada na mutsinga zwo edana tshiimo tshawe. (Maumela 1968 : 34)

(At this stage, she is a beautiful little girl, with a body and well-built legs, while the feet are small. Her shoulders and her neck are proportionate to her height.)

Training as a nurse at the hospital, Musandiwa is described as follows:

U vha hezwino a tshi vbonala o no vha muthu mupfufhinyana wa khofheni hupfufhi, ha marama o dalaho. Mutsinga na maheda zwa vha zwo tou linganela zwavhudi. Milenzhe ya thafu dza madzwatata na zwinayo zwituku. (Maumela 1968 : 81)

(She appears to be rather short, with a small face and well-rounded cheeks. Her neck and shoulders are just right and her legs have beautiful calves and small feet.)

By continually informing us, via the narrator, of Musandiwa's physical development, the author intends to indicate her ability to adapt to new situations and growing up, but such descriptions are rather uninteresting and interrupt the progression of events, and the author thus becomes laborious in conveying his message.

As in ELELWANI, the author makes use of other characters in the story to depict some of Musandiwa's traits. Many admire Musandiwa's intelligence. Negumela, her school principal, says to Liwalaga:

Ndi tshi tou amba ngoho ndi sa vha hofholi hoyu n'wana wavho zwi sumba uri pfunzo i khou mu anda. Na rine mathitshara ri khou ita na u mu tama. Ndo vhuya nda pfa mu'we wa mathitshara ashu a tshi amba uri u tama arali o vha e n'wana wawe. (Maumela 1968: 22)

(I am not flattering you, I am telling you the truth, this daughter of yours is gifted. Even we teachers admire her. I once heard one of them saying he wished she were his daughter.)

This point is emphasised by Nyadzanga, her step-sister, who tells her mother

Nga u vhona hanga Musandiwa a si muthu ane dza do ri dzi tshi vhuya ha do wanala o feila lini. Arali ha pfi o feila, izwo hu do vha ho feila kilasi ya hone yothe. (Maumela 1968 : 28)

(According to me, Musandiwa is not the type who will fail. If she happens to fail, it will mean that the whole class has failed.)

In this way the author succeeds in making his point that Musandiwa is an intelligent girl. As a result, her refusal to accept the arranged marriage to Mafanedza comes as no surprise to the readers, in spite of the fact that a girl of her age should not argue with her father. It is clear that such an intelligent girl should pursue her studies to be able to help others. The progression of plot in this regard has been convincingly moved forward by the author, hence results in a good portrayal of theme.

From what Mufanadzo says, the readers learn that Mafanedza, Totshayo's son, is ugly:

Hone-vho muthannga uyu wa Vho-Thotshayo u kanya nga mbifho hei yawe. Ho ngo fanela u mala nwana wanga nne. (Maumela 1968 : 75)

(Totshayo's son is not fit to marry my daughter. He is too ugly to marry her.)

After Liwalaga has given up the idea of Musandiwa marrying Mafanedza, he decides that Mafanedza should instead take Tshipali, his daughter from Mufanadzo. Mufanadzo does not approve of the idea on the grounds that Mafanedza is ugly. This could also have been another reason why Musandiwa would not accept Mafanedza as her husband. Mafanedza's ugliness can therefore be taken as one of the causes of the conflict between Musandiwa and Liwalaga. The author successfully uses other characters to tell us of Mafanedza's ugliness and so develops his plot to bring out his theme.

4.1.3 *Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

The author uses the expository technique to reveal the traits of certain characters by what other characters in the narrative have

to say about them. We learn of *Muthukhuthukhu's* drunkenness from what Raluano says.

Hafhu ndi pfa vha tshi nga vha khou nukha na halwa. Zwino arali hu uri nangoho vho vhu nwa, vha songo tsha zwi dovha na duvha na lithihi, vhunga na vhone vha tou mbo zwi divha zwavhudivhudi zwaure mulayo a u tendi muthu a tshi da tshikoloni o nwa halwa. (Maumela 1977 : 42)

(I am smelling that you have been drinking. If it is true that you have been drinking, don't repeat it, not even on a single day, since you know very well that the regulations do not permit a person to come to school after drinking beer.)

Muthukhuthukhu's friend, Ragavhu, tells him that there is a rumour that he (Muthukhuthukhu) is overdrinking.

Hetsho tshinoni tshi tshi amba tshi ri vhone vho no tou vha tshidakwa tshine tsha vho tou tshimbila na kubodelo kwa thothotho kana burandi tshikwamani. (Maumela 1977 : 79)

(That bird says you have reached a stage of drunkenness where you go about with a bottle of *thothotho*¹⁾ or brandy in your pocket.)

Nowhere in the narrative is Muthukhuthukhu described by the narrator as a drunkard. The author reveals the irresponsibility of today's teachers as regard drinking by making his point through what Raluano and Ragavhu say of Muthukhuthukhu.

Muthukhuthukhu's sister is disturbed by her brother's drinking habits. She informs Ragavhu to warn Muthukhuthukhu:

Havha khaladzi yanga, haano maduvha vho no dinekedza nga maanda kha halwa. A si maduvha manzhi ane a kovhela vha songo kambiwa kana u dzelela. A thi khou ri kha vha litshe u nwa halwa, hafhu na nne ndi ambaho ndi tshi khou nwa, nne ndi khou ri kha vha tou nwa lwa Tshivenda. Vha a divha muthu wa mudededzi a tshi vha tshidakwa a zwi faneli zwi a shonisa nga maanda. (Maumela 1977 : 82)

1) Homemade distilled spirit made from malt.

(This brother of mine, nowadays, has become addicted to beer drinking. He hardly allows a day pass without drinking. I do not say that he must stop drinking, since I also drink. What I mean is that he must drink as is customary among our people. It is disgraceful for a teacher to be a drunkard.)

From the above passages, we come to the conclusion that in this novel the author has deviated from the traditional method of revealing the traits of characters through descriptions and explanations. In this way, Maumela has been successful in using the expository technique to depict Muthukhuthukhu. Most of the characters in this novel are depicted through their actions and what they say. We are not therefore going to discuss any further examples.

4.2 The dramatic technique

The dramatic technique is the one most favoured by readers because it involves them in the development of plot, as characters are given a chance to reveal themselves through their own actions, dialogue and general behaviour. That is why Serudu (1979 :62) calls this technique 'self-delineation'. Cohen (1973 :38) says that what the characters do and say provides enormous insight into their make-up.

Knott (1973 : 42) considers dramatic characterization as the best technique of depicting characters:

... characterization can be accomplished only if there is effective dramatization - which only means that the writer achieves characterization most naturally and effectively by showing his characters in action, and not by telling the readers what characters are like.

This method of handling characters is not economical, like the expository technique. Wymer (1978 : 35) makes the point that

Indirect presentation may not be as economical as direct presentation, but it is more convincing, and a character must do or say something in a story, rather than a character sketch or an essay, is to be written.

According to Wymer, when an author allows readers to infer what a character is like by showing them the character speaking or acting, he has used indirect presentation. From the character's behaviour, his speech, and his recorded thoughts, readers make deductions about his personality, his attitudes, and his relationships with others.

Although dialogue is used to a limited extent in Maumela's novels, he manages to use action to reveal the traits of his characters to bring out his themes. I shall now examine how Maumela uses action and dialogue to portray his characters.

4.2.1 *Elelwani*

In this novel, *Elelwani* is portrayed as a young girl who belongs to the rising generation in the Venda community who believes that one has the freedom to choose one's own husband.

The author has successfully illustrated this attitude through Elelwani's actions. Mabaḁa, Elelwani's father, tries to force her to accept Ratshihule, a sixty-year old man, as her future husband. Elelwani tells her parents that she is not willing to marry him. Mabaḁa uses different threats, but she insists that she will not marry Ratshihule. To emphasise her determination, she falls in love with Vele, a young man of her own age. This is revealed when she tells Vele

Dugu yanu ndi khou tuwa nayo ni ḁo i wana zwenezwo mbamatshelo. (Maumela 1976 8)

(I am taking your handkerchief along, you will take it the day after tomorrow when we meet.)

According to the Venda custom, the act of taking a man's handkerchief reveals that a Venda girl has fallen in love with the man. When they accept a marriage proposal they do not do it verbally. They show it by accepting anything e.g. (handkerchief) from the man or by handing something, e.g. (bangle) to the man.

After marriage arrangements are finalised by the two families, Ratshihule's messengers are sent to fetch Elelwani. She uses delaying tactics to avoid the marriage by demanding unnecessary gifts which she thinks they will not be able to provide. She finally gives in because she fears her father's threats. While at Ratshihule's place, she is accused of bewitching the *khosi* and thus is bound to be evicted. She is not worried by this because she does not love Ratshihule. After her eviction she marries Vele. Elelwani's actions prove that she believes she is entitled to choose a husband of her own.

The author has used Elelwani's actions to build up his plot progression. The conflict is intensified through Elelwani's resistance to accepting Ratshihule as her husband and by her falling in love with a young man of her own age, the author brings out the point that modern young people do not accept the idea that parents are entitled to dictate to them on matters which affect their future lives. The theme of this novel is thus successfully revealed by the actions of the main character. The traits and feelings of a character can also be revealed through what the character says. Elelwani wants a husband of her own choice. She tells Vele

Zwo ralo, fhedzi a tho ngo tou vha funa, ndi khou tou kombetshedzwa nga vhabebi. Ndi tshi tou ni vhudza tsha ngoho, mbiluni thi vhuyi nda ri ndi na munna-vho. U malwa na u sa malwa ngavho kha nne ndi tshithu tshithihi. (Maumela 1976 : 8)

(It is true, but I do not love him, I am being compelled by my parents. To tell you the truth, I do not regard him as my husband. I may or may not get married to him.)

She also tells her parents:

Nna huufha ndo di vha vhudza na kale zwauri thi vha funi havho Vho-Ratshihule vhane vha khou nkombetshedza khavho. Tho ngo vhuya nda vha dzumbela na izwo kaleni. Aridi-ha yeneyi thundu ya vathu ine vha khou la vha le vha tshi i divha. (Maumela 1976 : 11)

(For a long time I have been telling you that I do not love Rathsihule whom you are compelling me to marry. I never

concealed this fact from you. When you squander the *thundu* they bring here, you must use it knowing that you are going to have to repay it.)

Elelwani's dialogue in these passages clearly shows that she does not accept her parents' choice and coercion. She reveals herself as a girl who belongs to the rising generation of Blacks who believe that they have freedom of choice. She intensifies the conflict by telling her parents that she is not prepared to marry Ratshihule. Besides, her words contribute towards the development of plot because the author uses them to achieve his theme. The readers are persuaded that she will not marry Ratshihule because she says it in her own words.

However, although Elelwani belongs to the modern generation she also reveals the characteristics of traditional Venda girls who show respect to their parents. This is revealed in what Elelwani tells Vele after he has asked her to elope with him:

Hafhu kha ri ri ndi a ralo nda ni tahela, nda sokou welwa nga khombo zwenezwo ndi na inwi ni do^untsuma ha nnyi? Ii, Vele, kha ri zwi litshe, ndi khou zwi vhona a zwi nga shumi. (Maumela 1976 : 12 - 13)

(Suppose something happens to me after eloping with you, whom are you going to inform about that? Let us abandon this plan because I can see it will not work.)

Elelwani does not want to elope with Vele without the knowledge of her parents. She wants their blessing, to make them account for whatever happens to her in the future. Her background is used by the author to further develop the plot. Had Elelwani given in to Vele's suggestion, the author would have failed to depict the complexity of the conflict between traditionalists and modern people. Elelwani's belief in aspects of Venda culture has delayed the resolution of the conflict and also made readers aware of its complexities. Elelwani does not reject all aspects of Venda custom, only some aspects of it she feels are harmful to the happiness of the individual. There are many aspects of Venda

custom which she retains and seems to believe in - e.g. symbol of handkerchief and respect for parents. This complexity of the conflict helps to develop the theme of this novel.

Vele is portrayed as a young man who loves Elelwani wholeheartedly and one who fulfils his promises. This is revealed through his actions. He proposes marriage to Elelwani and advises her on how she can avoid marriage to Ratshihule. Their plan is shattered by Mabada's threats, but still, Vele insists that he will think of another plan which will save her from Ratshihule.

Ndi zwone ndi kha di do dovha nda vhamba mañwe maano. A kundwa aneo, nga khaladzi nga Musenzhe, nda tuwa kha lino a thi tsha do dovha nda lu vhea. (Maumela 1976 : 13)

(I understand, I will still come up with another plan. If the plan is unsuccessful, I swear by my sister Musenzhe that when I leave this area, I will never come back home.)

This gives Elelwani hope that she can still be freed from Ratshihule's hands. She says

Haiwa Vele, ni songo dikholwisa nga nthani ha nge. Nahone ni songo sokou tavhanya no fhulufhuwa tshothe, huñwe zwi nga sokou shanduka ra malana. (Maumela 1976 : 13)

(No Vele, do not go away because of me. Moreover, do not lose hope, it may still happen that we marry.)

Before Vele can come up with another plan, Elelwani is taken by Ratshihule. Vele then goes to an urban area and joins a certain Zionist Church to achieve what he has promised. He goes back home before long and is appointed priest of the church. He becomes Nemavhulani's friend, and together they plan to make Ratshihule evict Elelwani. After the appearance of medicine near Ratshihule's pfamo, attempts are made to find a person who can 'smell the cause'. The last person to be consulted in this regard is Vele, known as Matshinyise, through the influence of Nemavhulani. Matshinyise accuses Elelwani of placing the medicine, and suggests to the khosi that she be evicted immediately. After Elelwani's

eviction, Vele marries her and tells her that he was responsible for the placing of the medicine. The part played by Vele is very important in the development of plot and theme. Had it not been for Vele's plans and actions to make Ratshihule evict Elelwani, it would have been impossible for Elelwani to leave Ratshihule's place and marry him (Vele). The author would thus have failed to bring out his message.

Vele is depicted as a non-Christian who goes as far as using the word of God to achieve his aims after which he abandons Christianity. He confides this to Elelwani on their first meeting after Elelwani's eviction by Ratshihule:

Hai, ndo zwi litsha. Ndi kha di zwi itelani ndo no wana zwe nda vha ndi tshi khou lila zwonê? (Mauemela 1976 : 59).

(I have stopped that. Why should I continue with it when I have obtained what I have been aspiring to?)

In his plot progression, the author has used the church to convey his theme. Even if it is not customary for a *khosi* to seek help from a priest, the author has deemed it convincing to use Vele in a Christian atmosphere to bring out his message. Had it not been for Vele's plan to use Christianity to win Elelwani, there would have been no other way open to him since the *khosi* is considered a fearsome person in Venda society. The author gets Vele to abandon the priesthood to emphasise that Vele is a non-Christian, who only used the church to achieve his aim of getting hold of Elelwani.

Mabaga is portrayed as a proper traditionalist who sticks to Venda custom. He insists that Elelwani marry Ratshihule and he accepts *thundu* while Elelwani is still young. This is in keeping with the Venda culture. He threatens her with death when she refuses to marry Ratshihule. This is typical of a Venda traditional man who does not want to take his child's wishes into consideration. *Mabaga's* background strengthens the conflict between him and his daughter. His behaviour reveals the clash between the traditional custom and the modern way of life and enables the author to develop the plot.

However, Mabaḁa is presented as a man who sometimes fails to represent a traditional Venda because he neglects some of the customs. After Elelwani's eviction by Ratshihule on the accusation that she is a witch, Mabaḁa does not seem to be worried. According to custom, if one is sent home on the accusation of witchcraft, the matter should be reported to the local court so that both parties can visit a diviner who confirms or declares the accusation void. Mabaḁa should have inquired about the accusation. Mabaḁa does not act accordingly. Mabaḁa's action in this regard has made it simple for the author to bring home his message. Had Mabaḁa acted according to custom, it could have been difficult for the author to show a convincing resolution since the truth about witchcraft would be found, and he would have failed to reveal his theme.

4.2.2 *Musandiwa na Khotsi Vha-Ḵiwalaga*

Here, *Musandiwa* is portrayed as an intelligent young girl who is serious about her studies as she ignores her father's order to accept Mafanedza as her husband. As a result she is evicted from her home by Ḵiwalaga. This action does not affect her in furthering her studies, because even under worse conditions she insists on going to school. By showing *Musandiwa's* resistance towards her father's order, the author tries to bring out the importance of education in Africa today. She gets a first class pass in Std. VI, and is awarded a bursary by a pharmaceutical company in Pietersburg through the inspectorate. She continues without failure until she passes Std. 10 and complete her nursing career. Her seriousness for her studies pays off handsomely in the end.

Musandiwa does not hold a grudge against anyone who wrongs her. This is revealed when her father asks for assistance from her to refund the *thundu* paid to him in respect of Nyadzanga, after her husband evicted her. *Musandiwa* gives him the required amount and tells her father that she does not expect to be repaid.

In the dialogue with her father, Musandiwa reveals herself as a young girl whose sole interest is in education. She says:

Nne mbilu yanga mafhungo haya a i athu u a toda. Ndi muthu ane a khou funa u thoma u vuledza tshikolo ... havho vhathu kha vha vha landule, vha vha vhudze uri u la nwana u ri ha funi (Maumela 1968 : 30)

(I have not yet developed an interest in such things. My first priority is education. Reject that proposal and tell them that I don't love them.)

This creates a conflict between her and her father, and through this conflict the author convincingly develops his theme.

Liwalaga is portrayed as a stubborn, tradition-bound man, who does not have a social standing in life. The readers perceive him as a father who is not really concerned about Musandiwa's education at this point. He initially promises the principal to help her get through her studies, but within a short period he becomes negative. He is misled by Mufanadzo and Maswoliedza, who influence him to get Musandiwa a future husband who will fund her education. When he fails they encourage him to abandon Musandiwa. This shows that Liwalaga is indecisive and easily influenced. The author uses the Venda culture to initiate the conflict between Musandiwa and her father. According to Venda culture, the father is responsible for providing his daughter with a husband. By doing this, the author succeeds in showing the clash between traditional and current ways of life. Liwalaga's role is thus very important in the development of plot and theme.

To make Musandiwa accept his demands, he uses threats, he evicts her and beats her. After being warned by the commissioner to let Musandiwa continue with her studies, he still maintains that she should accept his plan, thus showing that he is stubborn indeed. The author has successfully used a traditional man who believes in giving orders to his children without taking their feelings into consideration to bring out his plot progression. According to

Venda culture, a father's word is final; a child must accept it without question. By having Liwalaga end up in gaol, the author aims to discourage parents from withholding their children from school in favour of marriage.

The technique whereby the characters themselves reveal their feelings and traits is used successfully in this novel, even though its use is rather limited.

In the introduction of this novel, Liwalaga is portrayed as a traditional, illiterate man who is interested in his children's education. He reveals this when he says

Haiwa, Vho-phirisipala, arali o ralo na nne ngeno ndi do edzisa maanda a u mu kukumedza na u mu tutuwedza uri a si tshi litshe. Ngoho vha amba zwone *fosamuthaimi* Mudzimu a nga mu thusa a vha musadzi o funzwaho. *Fosamuthaimi* ndi do tou kundwa u mu isa phanda nga nthani ha vhushai. *Baraithi* ndi do edzisa, naho hu u vheregela pfunzo yawe ndi nga zwi ita hezwo Vho-Thitshara. Hafhu na vhone vha nthuse-vho nga u mu tutuwedza. *Fosamuthaimi* vhone ku do vha pfa u fhira rine mabofu a songo funzwaho. (Maumela 1968 : 22)

(Mr Principal, if she is like that I also appreciate it. I will also try my utmost to encourage and persuade her not to leave school. You are speaking the truth; may God help that she becomes an educated woman. But I might be unable to finance her further education because of poverty. But I will try, even if it means working for her education. You must also help me by encouraging her. She is likely to accept advice from an educated person like you, rather than from us who are blind.)

Although the dialogue is long, the readers learn that Liwalaga is illiterate. The word 'blind' in the passage is figurative in meaning; it refers to his lack of education. This shows that Liwalaga belongs to a generation many of whose members did not get a chance to attend school. However, such people do see the importance of education, even if at a later stage he denies his daughter the opportunity to continue with her studies. Readers are not surprised to see Musandiwa striving for her education. From Liwalaga's dialogue above, the author tries to give background information to bring home the theme.

The italicised words in the above passage are not Venda words but loan words. These words are not used by Venda people in general. *Liwalaga's* use of these words reveals that he had been a labourer in an urban area where the language of Africans is characterised by the borrowing of frequently used English and Afrikaans words. This also gave him the opportunity to meet educated Africans and to realise the advantages they enjoy.

The author further builds up the importance of this theme by portraying *Liwalaga*, against the background of the Venda culture, as someone who acknowledges the importance of education in modern society. We must therefore conclude that *Mufanadzo* and *Maswoliedza* played a major part in discouraging *Liwalaga* from continuing to fund *Musandiwa's* education.

Liwalaga uses force to impose his will on other people. He says to *Musandiwa*:

Iwe Musandiwa, nne a thi tatiswi nga n'wana we nda tou beba. Ngauri nne havha vhathu ndi khou vha funa, izwo-ha u vho do tou vha funa nga swili. Wa sa vha funa u do tou tuwa hafhano mudini wanga. (Maumela 1968 : 30)

(*Musandiwa*, I do not want to argue with my own child. Since I love these people, you will have to love them too, whether you like it or not. If you do not love them you will have to leave my home.)

The people to whom *Liwalaga* is referring to in the above passage are *Mafanedza's* family, whom *Musandiwa* is forced to accept as her in-laws. This passage reveals *Liwalaga's* stubbornness.

Mufanadzo is depicted as a traditional Venda woman who does not discriminate against her husband's children by another wife. After the death of *Nyamueni*, *Musandiwa's* mother, she brings up *Musandiwa* well as if she were her own child. But on the other hand her action reveals her as a jealous woman. She is the cause of the conflict between *Musandiwa* and her father. She does not allow

Liwalaga to use the money received from Nyadzanga's in-laws to pay for Musandiwa's fees at school. After Liwalaga has indicated that he wants Musandiwa to continue with her studies, she tells him

Zwino-ha ndi khou ri ndi vha vhudze ndi vha fhedzele, u amba ngoho ndi khwine. Uvha vha songo ditshutshudza nga murunzi wa ningo vha ri tshelede vha nayo, vha tshi khou amba u do shumisa heyi ya vhakwasha vha nwananga ine ya kha di bva u diswa. (Maumela 1968 : 26)

(Now I want to tell you the truth. Don't fool yourself and think that you have got enough money, when you refer to the money from my daughter's in-laws.)

She goes further by suggesting that Liwalaga should give Musandiwa a husband who will help to finance her education. Musandiwa refuses to accept the man whom her father has chosen as her husband. This leads to a conflict between Musandiwa and her father. When Mufanadzo realises that Musandiwa is against the idea of being given a husband, she goes so far as to plead with her to accept the offer. She tells Musandiwa

Musandiwa nwana wa murathu wanga, ni songo tatisa mune wanu ... inwi tendani havha vhathu, ni vha thuse nga zwine vha khou amba zwone. (Maumela 1968 : 30)

(Musandiwa, daughter of my sister, (younger wife from the same man) don't argue with your father ... accept these people, and help him with what he is telling you.)

By forcing Musandiwa to accept Mafanedza, Mufanadzo wants to make sure that Musandiwa does not continue with her education. She even goes so far as to encourage Liwalaga to evict Musandiwa from his home. Her words and her actions belie her jealousy.

4.2.3 *Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

Muthukhuthukhu is portrayed as an irresponsible man who resorts to bribery to achieve his aims. This is revealed in his actions towards the people he works with and those who stay nearby. Muthukhuthukhu bribes the school committee through his friend Ragavhu, that he may be appointed as the principal of the school.

He becomes reluctant to teach the pupils. The parents of the pupils concerned petition him and he resigns from the teaching profession. He then resorts to drinking heavily. Through these actions the author reveals the behaviour patterns of some teachers which he discourages. This picture of Muthukhuthukhu helps develop the plot to achieve the theme of the narrative.

However, readers are in a position to infer that he is also a character who believes in bribes to attain high positions in the teaching profession. This is revealed when he suggests to his friend Ragavhu to use bribes so that he can be appointed as an inspector. He says

Arali ho vha hu na zwiṅwe zwine zwa fanela u itwa uri vha u wane hoyu mushumo, nṅe ndo vha ndi tshi nga zwi ita. (Maumela 1977 : 11)

(If there were any way, I could help you to get this position, I would do it.)

To bring out his theme, the author has used Muthukhuthukhu here to expose a common practice of teachers who regard bribery as the best tool to attain high positions.

In order to be appointed principal of the school, Muthukhuthukhu promises to give Ragavhu money to be used as a bribe. He says

Tshelede ya tshandanguvhoni ine vha khou amba yone ndi do vha nea, i nga di wanaḽa ṅamusṽ lino. (Maumela 1977 : 14)

(I will give you the money you are talking about, i.e. for a bribe. You may even get it today.)

The author highlights the rate of bribery in just one area to develop his plot and achieve his theme at the same time.

After Muthukhuthukhu resigns as a teacher, he is found drunk everyday. He drinks so much that often he does not know his way home. He says:

Tsho ndi iwe n̄wana wa khonani yanga? Khomani mutukana, i da u ntsumbedze ndila ya u ya hayani hanga. (Maumela 1977 : 74)

(It is you my friend's son? Come boy, show me the way to my home.)

Muthukhuthukhu's drunkenness makes him irresponsible to the point that he resigns from the teaching profession. To develop the plot, the author makes use of liquor to bring out bad elements in a character, which make him ignorant.

When Muthukhuthukhu goes for an interview at the circuit office, he is found by the circuit inspector to have a bottle of brandy in his pocket. This tendency of carrying liquor along is a characteristic of drunkards. When the circuit inspector asks him about the bottle he says

U bva namusi, a thi tsha do nwa hezwi zwithu. Hovhu vhudenga ndi do mbo di vhu laṭa ndi tshi tuwa. (Maumela 1977 : 84)

(Henceforth I will never drink this anymore. I will throw away the remaining content when I go.)

The readers come to realise that Muthukhuthukhu is a hardened drinker because of his apparent need to carry liquor in his pocket. The drinking habit portrayed in this narrative has been used to draw attention to the fact that many school children in Venda are neglected by drinking teachers. Muthukhuthukhu's excesses in drinking throughout the narrative inevitably lead to his resignation.

Although Muthukhuthukhu belongs to the educated class of people who have abandoned many traditional practices, one still sees him as a man who believes in diviners; to him, any action one wants to engage in must be strengthened by a diviner.

The passage below shows how he prevailed upon Ragavhu for them to consult a diviner together when they were trying to gain the positions of principal and inspector respectively.

Muhumbulo une nda khou amba wone ndi wa uri a si khwine na ri tshi ranga uri tshimbili-tshimbili kha helila fhungo le ra vha ri tshi khou rera? Ndi zwone zwine vha khou pfa ndi tshi ri a lu khwathi fhedzi lunundu, lu khwatha lu na thanda ngomu. (Maumela 1977 : 8 - 9)

(The point I should like to make is that, won't it be better if we consult a diviner concerning the matter we have been talking about? That is why I am telling you that *lunundu* cannot be on its own, there should be something to strengthen it.)

The use of the proverb 'a lu khwathi fhedzi lunundu, lu khwatha lu na thanda ngomu' indicates that Muthukhuthukhu believes that nothing should be done without first consulting diviners. His belief in diviners contributes towards the development of the plot since the diviner whom they visit encourages them to use bribes and other devious means to get the positions.

Because *Ragavhu* is portrayed as a person of high standing in the teaching profession, one cannot understand why he involves himself in bribery. From his deeds one cannot but conclude that he got the position of inspector of schools through bribery. This is revealed from his encouragement of the use of bribes to attain the position of principalship and his passing on of the bribes from Muthukhuthukhu to the school committee. *Ragavhu* tells Muthukhuthukhu

Namusi lino ndi fanela u mbo di thoma u zwi itisa zwauri vhone vha dzene tshiduloni hetshino tshanga tsha vhuphirisipala. (Maumela 1977 : 14)

(Today I must start making it possible for you to occupy my position.)

Ragavhu wants his friend Muthukhuthukhu to be appointed as principal of the school. However, when he considers Muthukhuthukhu's academic qualifications, he notices that he does not qualify. The only alternative is to make use of bribes. *Ragavhu* says

Tshelede kha i wanale namusi, vhunga ndi tshi khou ri mafhungo haya ndi khou toda u mbo di a thoma namusi. (Maumela 1977 : 14)

(Give me the money today, because I want to attend to this matter today.)

After receiving the money, Ragavhu visits members of the school committee individually, handing them part of the money. He tells Mukhetho, one of the members of the school committee

Vhunga zwino ro no tendelana kha haya mafhungo, kha vha fare zwavho ndivhuho thukhuthukhu i no bva kha Vho-Muthukhuthukhu asiya. (Maumela 1977 : 16)

(Since we have come to an agreement about this matter, take this little token of gratitude from Muthukhuthukhu.)

When the strategy of bribing members of the school committee fails, he encourages Muthukhuthukhu to be against Raluano who has qualified to be appointed to the position. Ragavhu's actions hasten the plot progression. His position demands that he guides Muthukhuthukhu in the right direction, seeing that his friend was ready to accept advice from him. The inspector's behaviour is so important to the development of the plot and theme that we may say that without him, Muthukhuthukhu would in all probability have acted differently.

Once again, Maumela successfully uses the dramatic technique whereby the character's own words and actions give the readers insight into that character's disposition and attitudes.

4.3 Name-giving technique

Some names that authors give to characters portray a character's behaviour and personality. Although some of the names in Maumela's novels portray characters, the author does not rely on this device very often. Some names have no bearing whatsoever on what the person does. Only a few names in his novels can be associated with specific deeds.

4.3.1 *Elelwani*

After joining the Zionist Church, Vele is known as Matshinyise. His main aim in joining the church is to break up the existing relationship between Ratshihule and Elelwani.

Matshinyise is derived from the verb *-tshinya* which means to destroy. Here the author uses the name of Matshinyise to portray part of Vele's character, which he plays at a particular point in time. This word is used contrarily to the work of a priest. Matshinyise is called to identify the person who bewitches Ratshihule. When he is about to point out the person who is responsible, he says

U ni vhudza ngaurali a thi iteli tshinwe tshithu, ndi shavha la matshelo ni sa do ri Matshinyise, dzina li langa, o ri tshinyela na u ri pwashela mudi washu, we ra vha ro dzula nga zwavhudi. (Maumela 1976 : 52)

(I am not saying this for any ulterior motive lest you say tomorrow that Matshinyise, true to his name, has broken up our home where we were living together in harmony.)

The passage above reveals that Vele gave himself the name of Matshinyise purposely, because he intended to break up Ratshihule's home by identifying Elelwani as a witch. He also broke up the good relationship between Ratshihule and Mabađa's family.

His actions can easily be associated with his name. He accuses Elelwani of bewitching Rashihule, whereas the medicine found near the hut was deliberately planted there by himself and Nemavhulani. He ordered Ratshihule to evict Elelwani to make it easier for himself to marry her. Indeed, Elelwani is evicted by Ratshihule, and Matshinyise rejoices in the action because he succeeded in breaking up the relationship. The name Matshinyise and the actions associated with it renders Vele to be a tritagonist. It is through his actions that the author manages to further develop the plot of the narrative and to bring out his theme.

The name Ratshihule can be equated with a bundle of grass called *tshihule* in Tshivenda which is used for thatching huts. For the Venda people, life would be impossible without this grass since they would not have anything to protect themselves against natural disasters such as rain and wind. One of the functions of a *khosi* is to protect his people. Ratshihule thus befits the name of a *khosi*, since he is considered by his people an important person in their lives. That is why Elelwani's parents offer her to Ratshihule. The author thus uses the name Ratshihule symbolically to reveal the importance of the *khosi* in developing the theme in this novel.

4.3.2 *Musandiwa Na Khotsi Vho-Liwalaga*

Musandiwa is a name derived from the verb stem *-sanda*, which means 'to disregard or dislike'. This name means 'one who is disliked or not wanted'. She performs well at school, but Mufanadzo is not happy about her performance. Mufanadzo influences Liwalaga to abandon her on the accusation that she does not obey her father's order. She is evicted by her father and stays with her grandmother. At the hospital Musandiwa is not on good terms with the nursing sister and is accused of ill-treating patients. Even if this latter action has nothing to do with plot progression, together these incidents clearly show that Musandiwa is disliked.

Nyamueni is derived from the noun *mueni* which means 'a visitor'. Such a visitor is only seen for a short period. A visitor can bring both good and bad news to the people. Nyamueni in this narrative is a 'visitor' because she dies suddenly in the introductory part of the novel. Her appearance is to introduce the main character Musandiwa, her daughter. Nyamueni and the part she plays in this novel - is valuable because she is the initiator of the main character through whom the plot and theme are developed.

4.3.3 *Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu*

The name Raluano in this novel is derived from the verb stem *-ana*, which means 'to abide by one's beliefs'. Raluano is a person who does not deviate from his personal beliefs. The name typifies Raluano's actions. When he gives Muthukhuthukhu a class which he refuses to teach, Muthukhuthukhu indicates to Raluano that he will not be able to teach the class. The other members of staff request Raluano to reverse the decision in order to save the situation, but he does not deviate from his decision. He goes as far as reporting Muthukhuthukhu to the inspector. He insists that Muthukhuthukhu takes the class. Muthukhuthukhu tenders a letter of resignation which Raluano happily receives. This shows that Raluano does not regret his actions, which help to develop plot and reveal Muthukhuthukhu's bad behaviour in the community. As can be seen from the above discussion, Name-giving, as a means of characterization, has been minimally used by Maumela in his novels.

4.4 Comparative assessment of the handling of characters in Maumela's novels

Hereunder I shall compare the use of the techniques of character depiction by Maumela in the novels discussed above.

4.4.1 *Expository technique*

The use of the expository technique is dominant in *ELELWANI* and *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA*. In *ELELWANI*, I argue that the author unsuccessfully uses the description of the physical features of characters to depict them. The descriptions themselves are too long. Apart from this fact, the narrator further spoils the narration with his interruptions by giving his own judgment on the descriptions provided. This type of character portrayal bores the readers who are interested in short descriptions which allow them to come to their conclusions regarding the traits and feelings of characters.

The use of the expository technique in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA is, I think, handled more successfully to reveal the traits of characters. Even though the author has exaggerated the use of the physical descriptions by providing them both in the exposition and during the development of the plot, the descriptions are short and without any judgment by the narrator. Readers are free to form their own judgments. Against this background, one can say that the author has managed to effectively develop the theme in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA.

In NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, the readers get to know a character through what other characters say about him. Few descriptions or explanations of the physical features of characters are found. Readers are involved in the development of plot as they try to visualise characters from what other characters say about them. Characters in this regard are depicted, rather than being given by the narrator through descriptions.

4.4.2 *Dramatic technique*

In ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, the use of the dramatic technique is limited. However, the author has given some characters a chance to reveal themselves through their own actions and dialogue. Maumela has used the dramatic technique in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU effectively. Good characterization in this regard means a good progression of plot. Through this technique, the author has managed to bring out a convincing theme.

4.4.3 *Name-giving technique*

The name-giving technique is not used widely by Maumela in the novels under consideration. However, the few character-revealing names that are used help the development of the various themes.

The most successful portrayal of character is to be found in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, followed by MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, with ELELWANI having the least effective. Maumela's progress in the handling of character from ELELWANI, his first novel, to NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, one of his latest, is both noticeable and gratifying. This is an indication of his growing maturity and skill as a novelist.

CHAPTER 5

ORGANIZATION OF MATERIAL IN MAUMELA'S NOVELS

The ordering of events in the selected novels will be discussed in this chapter. Since the ordering of events helps to build up the plot, it is of paramount importance for us to investigate the techniques Maumela uses in this area. In this chapter, I shall examine Maumela's use of suspense, flashback and foreshadowing to order events and to develop the plots and themes of his novels.

5.1 Suspense

To make his story effective and more attractive, an author can use suspense to hold his reader's interest during the progression of events. The readers become involved in the storyline only if the author keeps him wanting to know what will happen next. When this device is used, the author usually succeeds in developing a good plot and a convincing theme. The use of suspense is best revealed in *ELELWANI* and *NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU*. Suspense in *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA* has been used, but to a limited extent, as shown in the analysis below.

5.1.1 *Suspense in ELELWANI*

Many authors in their first attempt at writing novels, do not always succeed in using suspense effectively. Maumela is an exception in this regard because he uses this device successfully in his first narrative, *ELELWANI*. When the readers go through this novel, they are always keen to know what will follow.

In its introductory chapter, the readers learn that Elelwani is forced to marry Ratshihule whom she does not love. There is nothing she can do to avoid the pre-arranged marriage. Vele comes to her rescue by promising to rescue her. He says

Nge ndi nga ni funzedza maano arali ni tshi funa, a u tala hoyu munna, fhedzi hu si namusi, ni nga nanga linwe duvha. (Mauemela 1976 : 8)

(I can tell you a plan to break up your marriage to this man if you want, but not today, you must select another day.)

Vele does not want to tell Elelwani the plan there and then. He asks Elelwani to select another day. Both the readers and Elelwani are immediately anxious to know what the plan is. The suspense is heightened when Elelwani's parents tell her that Ratshihule is coming soon to collect her. She longs for the day that Vele and herself agreed to meet and discuss the plan, but it is still far off. The readers read on, anxious to know the plan and see if it will ever really work. The author delays the revelation of the plan to maintain the reader's interest. Mauemela thus uses suspense effectively in the exposition by stimulating the reader's desire to know what will happen next.

After some days Vele reveals his plan, which Elelwani rejects. Both she and the readers are now convinced that she will end up married to Ratshihule. To keep up Elelwani's hope and thereby, the reader's interest, Vele says

Ndi zwone, ndi kha di do dovha nda vhamba manwe maano. A kundwa aneo, nga khaladzi nga Musenzhe, nda tuwa kha lino a thi tsha do dovha nda lu vhea. (Mauemela 1976 : 13)

(I understand, I will still come up with another plan. If the plan is unsuccessful, I swear by my sister Musenzhe that when I leave this area, I will never come back home.)

He is so determined to rescue her that he vows to leave his homeplace forever if he fails. He still maintains that he will devise another plan to upset the marriage to Ratshihule. When Elelwani bids him goodbye as she is escorted from her home to become Ratshihule's wife, there is an encouraging ring in her farewell - he will find a new way of rescuing her. Interest is

maintained when the 'tshikona'¹⁾ dancers from Mianzwi visit Ratshihule's place. Elelwani spends much of her time looking for Vele in vain. This shows that she is still waiting for the promised plan from Vele.

Throughout the story the readers are kept anxious to know more about the plan which Vele promised Elelwani. As the story progresses, one's interest is held by the fact that the time factor does not worry Vele. Indeed, Elelwani shows concern for him when she says

Haiwa, Vele, ni songo dikholwisa nga nthani ha nne. Nahone ni songo sokou tsvhanya no fhuufhuwa tshothe, huwe zwi nga sokou shanduka ra malana. (Maumela 1976 : 13)

(Do not go forever because of me. Moreover, do not lose hope immediately, for it may still happen that we shall marry each other.)

From what she says, readers can deduce that she herself may try to do something to spoil the marriage to Ratshihule. Obviously she is not helplessly dependent on Vele. In spite of the powerful position of Ratshihule, she will continue to free herself from his clutches so that she can marry her lover.

In this way, the author uses the device of suspense to make the rising action effective. He successfully shows the exciting development of action by inviting the readers to participate in the narrative through eagerness to know what will happen next. This device helps the author reveal his theme dramatically.

At the peak of the action, Elelwani finds herself evicted by Ratshihule, but still the readers cannot see how Vele helped her. The readers are still expecting Vele's plans although the suspense in this regard is done away with at the denouement. We become aware of Vele's plan when Vele narrates how he managed to use

1) A traditional Venda dance

Nemavhulani, the *khosi's* right-hand man, and how he (Matshinyise) identified Elelwani as having bewitched the *khosi* in order to have her evicted. Suspense in this regard has been used effectively by the author to unite Vele and Elelwani, and hence it contributes towards bringing out the theme.

The author ends his narrative on a note of suspense. There are many questions which we can ask ourselves at the end of the narrative. The narrator does not tell us how Elelwani's parents felt after her eviction on the accusation of witchcraft. According to the Venda custom, it is an insult to a Venda parent if his/her child is accused of witchcraft. Elelwani's parents should have investigated the accusation by a joint deputation, consisting of them and the *khosi's* messengers to a diviner. Elelwani's parents are quiet in this regard.

Furthermore, it is highly questionable for a priest to abandon his church activities immediately after entering the ministry. His followers will raise many questions concerning his abandonment of the ministry. As Vele and Elelwani marry each other at the end, it is probable that the *khosi* will soon get to know about it and doubt Matshinyise's motives in accusing Elelwani of witchcraft and insisting that she be evicted. Ratshihule could conclude that he has been robbed of his wife whom he loved so dearly. This can lead to many confrontations between him and Vele, and between Ratshihule and Nemavhulani. The narrator has left us with many questions to answer hence further suspense. The fact that Elelwani stayed with Ratshihule for more than a year and failed to conceive, but gave birth to four children after marrying Vele leaves a big question mark as to whether Ratshihule was productive or not. Nowhere in the novel was it indicated that Ratshihule had any children by his other wives.

Maumela, in this novel, uses the device of suspense in developing the action and at the same time uses it to resolve the conflict effectively. Doubtfire (1978 : 45) says that the narrator must satisfy the readers, yet also leave them wondering how the characters are making out in that mysterious world that lies beyond the final page.

5.1.2 *Suspense in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA*

Suspense in this novel is not used throughout, but there are a few events which hold the reader's interest to know more. For example, after Musandiwa refuses to accept Mafanedza as her husband, she is evicted from home by her father. At this point, readers are anxious to know whether she will continue with her schooling or give in to her father's demands. However, Musandiwa is determined to continue with her education, so the following day she goes to school. She also receives a bursary to further her studies. This suspense is thus shortlived. However, the author successfully makes readers participate in the story by stimulating the curiosity.

One other instance which suspends the readers in this novel is when Netshiungani, Musandiwa's uncle, refuses to help her with clothes while furthering her studies at a secondary school. Netshiungani promises to buy her clothes only if her father repays his money. This is impossible because Musandiwa is not on good terms with her father. Readers are eager to know if Musandiwa will finally go to a secondary school. After a short period, a conflict between Netshiungani and Liwalaga develops. This conflict leads Netshiungani to give his support to Musandiwa and help her further her studies.

5.1.3 *Suspense in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU*

The use of suspense in this novel is limited but effective. Although the story encourages us to read further the development of events, suspense has not really contributed in this regard.

Ragavhu succeeds in bribing some of the members of the school committee, making him confident that Muthukhuthukhu will succeed him as principal of the school. When he goes to Ramuneta, one of the new members of the school committee, his bribe is refused. On being offered the money, Ramuneta says

Ya nga vha i heyo tshelede thi vhuyi nda i tanganedza. Hufhani uyu u mushumo wanga wa u dzudzanya mafhungo a itshi tshikolo. Nda sa a dzudzanya ndi do vha ndo nyadza vhe vha nkhetha uri ndi vhe murado wa komiti hei. Vhone vho mbo tou ita mushumo wavhudi wa u sia vho ri eletshedza hune ra fanela u kanda hone. (Māumela 1977 : 18)

(As for that money I do not accept it. It is my responsibility to work for the school. If I do not do this, I will be disloyal to those who elected me to be a member of this committee. You have done your task by advising us on how we should deal with the matter.)

This introduces suspense as Ragavhu is no longer sure that Muthukhuthukhu will be appointed as principal. Besides, he does not know what Ramuneta, having rejected the bribe, is going to do in spite of telling him that he has done his task by indicating the person who should replace him.

Ramuneta does not tell Ragavhu that he will make it possible for Muthukhuthukhu to be appointed principal of the school, neither does he tell him that he is against the appointment. The action keeps readers on edge, wanting to know whether Ragavhu will succeed in having Muthukhuthukhu appointed principal and what influence Ramuneta will have on the outcome. This is maintained over a fairly long period of time, until the day members of the school committee meet to decide on the successor.

Even if the use of suspense is limited in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU the author has successfully used it to develop the progression of events.

5.2 Flashback

Through the use of flashback, the author is able to break up the chronological sequence of events by stopping the story and taking the readers back. This device is very important for providing the readers with background information on characters and the causes of the conflict. However, it does not mean that the author must

always rely on this device because some of the events can successfully be fitted into the ongoing narrative without the use of flashback.

5.2.1 *Flashback in ELELWANI*

The use of flashback in this novel is limited. In the introductory chapter the narrator tries to reveal why Vele and his friend follow Elelwani and Mutshekwa to Gammbani without their knowledge. He is trying to provide background information about the relationship between Vele and Elelwani by taking the readers back. The narrator says:

Itali ndi kale a tshi khou tama u amba na Elelwani. Ndi mbamulovha davhani la Vho-Nyamasindi he a vhuya a edzisa u amba nae, zwa ro sa divhalea. (Maumela 1976 : 7)

(For a long time he had wished to speak to Elelwani. It was the day before yesterday at Nyamasindi's *davhani*¹) that he tried to speak to her, but in vain.

Since it is a boy and a girl who are involved, we can conclude that Vele wants to declare his love to Elelwani but is unsuccessful. At this stage the readers can understand why Vele and Nthambeleni sacrificed their sleep and got up early in the morning to get hold of Elelwani and Mutshekwa on their way to Gammbani. The author has made it simple for the readers to detect the proposed relationship between Vele and Elelwani.

The author uses flashback at the denouement in this narrative to answer the many questions encountered in the progression of events. Elelwani is accused of placing omens near the *khosi's pfamo*. The fact that she cries suggests that she is not responsible. Matshinyise (Vele), a Zionist Church priest, accuses Elelwani of bewitching Ratshihule. People around Makovheni do not know Matshinyise, except that he is a priest, even though Mianzwi is not

1) communal work (e.g. tilling the land)

far away. Even Elelwani does not recognise him because he has grown a long beard to conceal his identity to those who knew him before he joined the church. Furthermore, at the beginning of the conflict Vele promised Elelwani that he would come up with a new plan to rescue her from the hands of Ratshihule. Up until the denouement readers do not see anything which could have led to this.

After Elelwani's eviction, Vele meets her and takes her back to the development of action. He explains everything that transpired during their separation. It is now that Elelwani gets to know the cause of her eviction, the one who insisted that she be evicted, and who placed the medicine near the *khosi's* hut. The readers are also in a better position to know what happened during the progression of events. This is achieved through a flashback by the narrator. It is learnt that Vele and Nemavhulani, the *khosi's* righthand man, jointly planned to instigate Elelwani's eviction. Nemavhulani was responsible for placing the omens near the hut, while Matshinyise disclosed to the *khosi* that Elelwani was responsible and suggested that she be evicted immediately as she was about to kill the *khosi*.

By making the readers retrace the development of events, the narrator reveals to them that Vele has fulfilled his promise to rescue Elelwani.

The use of flashback here helps the author to bring out the theme of the narrative. Had those questions encountered in the development of action been left unanswered, it would be very difficult for the author to convince us to accept the theme of the narrative.

5.2.2 Flashback in *MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA*

There is only one incident in which flashback is used in this story. It centres around Totshayo's family who is proposing the

marriage of Musandiwa to their son Mafanedza. Musandiwa's father, Liwalaga, wants to know more about Mafanedza before he can accept him. Mufanadzo tries to remind him of the boy but he does not remember him. When she tells him of Mafanedza's past, he replies

Ee, tsho, ndo no mu wana zwino. Oo, ndi houla we a do vha ene we a nthusa nga u vhulaha nowa ila ya phakhuphakhu ye ya vha yo dihabeledza nga ngomu tshitangani. (Maumela 1968 : 29)

(Yes I do remember him now. He is the one who helped me kill the rinkhals which was hiding inside the kitchen.)

Totshayo's son is introduced in the middle of the narrative. The author wisely introduces him by flashback since readers know nothing about him before. Through flashback the author is in a position to recall the connection between Liwalga and Mafanedza. Mafanedza is not a stranger in this family. We get to know that he is from Mufanadzo's home area and is a friend of her brother. This common background gives Mafanedza a good chance of being accepted by Liwalaga as Musandiwa's husband. According to Venda custom, parents do not allow their daughters to be married to strangers whose background is unknown. Flashback is used successfully in the exposition of Mafanedza, since he is the source of the conflict in the narration. In the narrative Mafanedza plays a major role in helping the author achieve his theme.

Maumela does not use this device in all his novels. We have noticed from the above examination of this technique that in some other novels it is used to a limited extent. In NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU it was not used at all.

5.3 Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is important in establishing unity of structure because it links elements in different parts of the story. Souvage (1965 : 87) describes foreshadowing as

... a plot device based on association in time and through which future (climactic) events and scenes are prepared and anticipated.

The readers are in a position to see the connection between events which are taking place now with others which will occur later. The use of foreshadowing occurs in some of Maumela's novels.

5.3.1 *Foreshadowing in ELELWANI*

There are few instances in this novel where the device of foreshadowing is used effectively to establish unity of structure.

At the exposition of the narrative, readers learn that Elelwani and Vele live in the same village, Mativhini. But as Elelwani is about to be taken by Ratshihule's messengers, she learns that Vele and his parents are moving to a village known as Mianzwi. It is Vele's friend Nthambeleni, who informs Elelwani of this:

Ni a zwi divha zwauri vha hawe vha khou pfulutshela Mianzwi?
(Maumela 1976 : 16)

(Do you know that his parents are resettling at Mianzwi?)

Perhaps this passage seems irrelevant to the progression of events since it does not contribute to the development of plot. However, it does help the readers have a clear meaning of the story because it unifies the loose events which occur later in the development of action and its resolution as illustrated below. In support of this argument I would like to refer to Cohen (1973 : 185) who maintains that foreshadowing is a technique whereby an author uses details which suggest the ultimate outcome of a plot or which meaningfully predict the appearance of other details in a literary work. The relevance of Vele's parents moving to Mianzwi is clearly illustrated when a *tshikona* group of dancers from Mianzwi visits Makovheni, where Elelwani is living as the wife of Ratshihule. Since Elelwani is still waiting for Vele's plan to rescue her from Ratshihule, she immediately thinks that Vele might be one of the participants. She searches for him during the *tshikona* dance so that he can tell her of the progress with his plan.

At a later stage when the omens are placed near Ratshihule's hut, Nemavhulani suggests that a Zionist Church priest from Mianzwi be called to come and identify the one who is bewitching the *khosi*. Elelwani is accused of placing the omens. After her eviction she meets Vele who explains to her that he devised the plan and is responsible for the accusation. It is not easy for Elelwani to believe him, but because she knows that Vele and his parents have migrated to Mianzwi, she and the readers are persuaded that Vele is the said priest. This point illustrates the importance of Vele's parents' migration to Mianzwi because the different facets of a complex situation fall into place and unify the progression of events.

One other instance where foreshadowing is used successfully is the inclusion of Thambatshira's death, which initially seems to be irrelevant to the development of the conflict in this narrative. The author has purposely included this incident to explain the relationship between Vele and Nemavhulani, a relationship which makes major contribution to the resolution of the conflict.

While swimming in a dam, Thambatshira, Nemavhulani's daughter is trapped by rocks and dies instantly. Nemavhulani is pained by her death and goes to Matshinyise (Vele), a Zionist Church priest, for a revelation of the cause of Thambatshira's death. Venda custom demands that one finds out from a diviner who caused the death of a family member. Lestrade, in Van Warmelo (1960 : XII) says this about divination among Venda people:

This is therefore resorted to before any tribal or religious rite is performed and under many other circumstances of ill omen or uncertainty, as after lightning, visits of snake, polecat or antbear, in any case of theft, when cattle have strayed, before going on a journey - or when someone has died.

However, in this case Nemavhulani consults Matshinyise who is not a diviner but a Zionist Church priest. This consultation originates a close relation between the two. Jointly they plan to make

Ratshihule evict Elelwani. Even if it is not clearly stated why Nemavhulani is positive towards the plan, Thambatshira's death is a contributory factor. We are therefore not surprised to learn that the *khosi's* right-hand man helped Vele execute his plan. Thambatshira's death is used successfully as a foreshadowing to help resolve the conflict in ELELWANI.

The author has therefore managed to bring out the theme of the narrative through the use of this device. Had it not been for the death of Thambatshira, the readers would not understand how Nemavhulani agreed to get involved in the plan of making Ratshihule evict Elelwani.

5.3.2 *Foreshadowing in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA*

Maumela uses the technique of foreshadowing in this narrative to expose some of the characters who initially seem irrelevant to the development of action, but who, at a later stage, make an important contribution to the development of action.

The narrator mentions, through Nyadzanga, that Muanalo is the person who told her that she failed her final examinations. Nyadzanga tells this to her mother who asked about the results of the examinations. The naming of Muanalo at this stage has got nothing to do with the conflict between Musandiwa and her father, but at a later stage, we can see that in fact Muanalo is the source of the conflict between Musandiwa and her father. Muanalo is introduced here to prepare the readers for his increasing role as the story develops. It is revealed afterwards that Muanalo, who is Nyadzanga's boyfriend, pays money to her parents to marry her. Nyadzanga's mother, Mufanadzo, is against Liwalaga's plan to use the money to finance Musandiwa's education. As a result, Liwalaga, who is unemployed, has to accept Mafanedza as Musandiwa's husband. He accepts Mafanedza's money to cover the costs of Musandiwa's education but she is against the arrangement, hence the conflict between her and her father.

Foreshadowing is used by the author to expose Malondi to the readers as follows:

Kha ri musi a tshi vho amba u tanuwa tshivhanga tsha Mudzengele, a tangane na Malondi nwanā wa vhone Vho-Negumela wa mutukana o namela lubaisegere lwawe a tshi khou tutshela thungo ine ene a bva hone. (Maugela 1968 : 66)

(When she is about to reach the top of Mudzengele hillock, she meets Malondi, Negumela's son, riding his bicycle and coming in her direction.)

Although it is a well-known fact that Negumela plays a major role in helping Musandiwa to solve her problem, this does not necessarily mean that Malondi, Negumela's son is in any way important to the development of action. The mentioning of Malondi is perceived by readers as irrelevant at this stage. The narrator introduces Malondi in the middle of the narrative so that readers will not be surprised to see him become an important figure in Musandiwa's life at a later stage. After completing her education and working as a nursing sister, Musandiwa marries Malondi, Negumela's son. The close relationship which existed between Negumela and Musandiwa is strengthened by this marriage, since she is now his daughter-in-law. Furthermore, Malondi is used by the author to show that Musandiwa has succeeded in resisting her father's scheming by marrying a man of her own choice. The author introduces Malondi in the middle of the narrative to prepare us for his marriage to Musandiwa.

5.3.3 *Foreshadowing in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU*

Some of the information in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is not taken seriously by the readers on first reading it but as they read on, there comes a stage where they recall it and retrospectively realise its importance.

In the first pages of NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, Ragavhu invites Muthukhuthukhu to join him as one of the members of his staff. Muthukhuthukhu doubts if the members of the school committee will ever accept him. Ragavhu assures him by saying

Komiti i re hone i hafha zwandani zwanga, i nga si vhuye ya lala yo ita zwine ndi si fune. (Maumela 1977 : 8)

(The present school committee is fully under my control, they will never act against my wishes.)

One may initially assume that during the principalship of Ragavhu the members of the school committee were on good terms with him, but on reading further, one finds that this is not so. The above passage is simply a foreshadowing of what Ragavhu is really like. It is revealed at a later stage that what Ragavhu meant is that should he give them a bribe, they will accept Muthukhuthukhu.

When Ragavhu is about to leave for the position of inspector of schools, he recommends to the school committee that Muthukhuthukhu be his successor. To achieve this he gives them money. Although his bribery is unsuccessful, because one of the members does not accept the bribe, it becomes clear that when he said they were under his control he meant that it was easy for him to control them through bribes.

After Muthukhuthukhu has been rejected by the committee, Muthukhuthukhu's wife becomes sad and thinks that his rejection is a sign of hatred by some of the members. As a result she says

Hone muñwe wavho a tou khakha a dzhena hafhano mugini, ndi do mu shela nga madi a no fhisa, ngoho (Maumela 1977 : 28)

(If anyone of them enters this house by mistake, I will really burn him with hot water.)

This shows that she is angry with those who rejected her husband's appointment as principal. As a result she does not want to see any of them in her home. However, one cannot take her threat seriously because it was made on the spur of the moment at a time of great disappointment.

After her death one realises that what she said was just a foreshadowing of what would happen at a later stage. Muthukhuthukhu does

exactly what she had said. On the day of her funeral, many people amongst them members of the school committee, come to pay their last respects. Muthukhuthukhu becomes angry on seeing members of the school committee and decides there and then to chase them away. From his action, we simply conclude that Muthukhuthukhu is carrying out his late wife's warning that she does not want to see any of the members of the school committee at her home.

Through the device of foreshadowing, the author brings out his theme convincingly by giving readers a chance to see for themselves the relationship of the events, thus becoming participants in the development of the plot.

5.4 Comparative assesment of the organization of material in Maumela's novels

Suspense, flashback and foreshadowing are not used equally to order the events by Maumela in his novels. I will therefore try to compare the use of these techniques hereunder.

5.4.1 *Suspense*

Maumela uses this narrative technique successfully in ELELWANI since it appears throughout the story. He uses it in the exposition, in the development of action and also in the denouement. In the exposition both the readers and the main character are anxious to know the plan which Vele has promised. When the first plan does not succeed, Vele promises to come up with another, which keeps the readers anxious to know what will happen throughout the novel until the denouement is reached when Vele finally reveals his already accomplished plan to Elelwani. At the end Maumela leaves many questions unanswered to which readers must find their own solutions hence creating a suspension.

ELELWANI is Maumela's first novel, but it surpasses all the later ones in the use of suspense. This is one factor which makes me consider it the best among Maumela's novels.

Although suspense in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA is not as intense as that in ELELWANI and NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, Maumela tries to hold the readers' interest to know more about the future decisions and actions of the main character.

Although the use of the technique of suspense is limited in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, it has been used successfully to develop the conflict. By refusing a lump sum of money from Ragavhu but thanking him for the advice, Ramuneta sustains the reader's curiosity to know what will happen when the school committee finally decides on the appointment of the principal. By doing so, the author achieves his theme of discouraging bribery amongst teachers.

5.4.2 *Flashback*

Maumela uses flashback in ELELWANI to supply background information about the characters. For example, the readers are not surprised to see Vele following Elelwani wherever she goes, because through the use of flashback they have been informed about the relationship of Elelwani and Vele. The use of flashback here makes the exposition more convincing.

This technique has been successfully used in the denouement to bring out a convincing resolution. There are many events in the development of action which are questionable, for example, the identity of the priest, the person responsible for placing the omens, etc. The author supplies the information that is missing in the development of action, in the resolution, to bring out his theme.

It seems that Maumela did not wish to disturb the chronological sequence of events in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. The use of the technique of flashback appears once in this story. Liwalaga does not remember Mafanedza, who emerges as the source of the

conflict between him and his daughter, Musandiwa. Mufanadzo supplies the background information about Mafanedza, and Liwalaga is then able to recall him.

In NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, the technique of flashback is not used to help build up the plot.

5.4.3 *Foreshadowing*

In ELELWANI, the technique of foreshadowing is used in the exposition and in the development of action. What at first seems to be irrelevant information supplied in the exposition later leads up to future events in the development of action.

Foreshadowing is also used in the development of action to make the climax incredible in this narrative. Thambatshira's death is a good link between Vele and Nemavhulani. It enables the readers to accept that Nemavhulani and Vele jointly planned to make Ratshihule evict Elelwani and to believe that Nemavhulani placed the omens near Ratshihule's *pfamo*. The author thus uses Thambatshira's death to achieve his theme.

In MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, foreshadowing is used to introduce characters who later become important in the development of action.

Foreshadowing in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is used to reinforce the development of action. By telling Muthukhuthukhu that all members of the school committee are under his control, Ragavhu supplies a well prepared sign of bribery which readers anticipate. Readers are thus not surprised, in the middle of progression of events, to learn that Ragavhu and Muthukhuthukhu are involved in bribes.

Generally the author succeeds in ordering his events well to bring out the themes. However, the standard of the organisation of material deteriorates in his later novels. Maumela is successful in building up a convincing plot in ELELWANI, which is his first novel, through the use of suspense, flashback and foreshadowing, while MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA and NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU are more recent novels, but cannot be compared to ELELWANI in this regard. The author fails to use a combination of the various techniques in the latter two novels. Besides, the usage of such techniques is not as convincing in some instances as in ELELWANI.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION OF THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN MAUMELA'S NOVELS

Maumela is the first and also most prolific novelist in Venda literature to date. His literary popularity is proven by the fact that his works are read in high schools and tertiary institutions. This does not imply that the quantity of his prose works renders him the best novelist in Venda. Nevertheless, one can state with certainty that he has made a laudable effort in writing works which to a large extent satisfy the narrative techniques used by the most eminent novelists in the world.

The aim of this study, as indicated in the introductory chapter, was to analyse the use of some of the narrative techniques in three selected novels by Maumela.

Due to the limited scope of the research, it was not possible for me to investigate all the narrative techniques he uses in his novels. I concentrated on the techniques of point of view, the handling of characters and the organization of material because they seem to be the basic requirements of a novel. The analysis of these three narrative techniques was conducted in chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively. In these chapters I attempted to show that Maumela was able to work out the plots and bring to the fore the various themes in his narratives through his masterful handling of these techniques.

In this chapter I will conclude the discussion by showing the success of the author in using the above mentioned narrative techniques to convey his theme.

From the investigation of the use of the narrative techniques by Maumela, it has been argued that he uses them effectively to bring

out his message. Many of Maumela's novels share similar themes such as love. Through his skill in implementing the narrative techniques, he manages to bring out these similar themes differently. This is best illustrated by ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. Both novels portray the conflict between traditionalism and modernism. Young girls, who are the protagonists in these novels, are forced by their parents to accept husbands chosen on their behalf. They both reject their parents' offer and at the end they become victorious. The moral implication is quite evident here. The individual in modern society needs freedom of choice. Parents can no longer dictate terms to their sons and daughters as their parents did to them, especially in personal matters such as those pertaining to matrimony. The theme in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is different from that of the other two novels. The author in this novel successfully highlights the corruption prevailing among the present-day teachers.

6.1 Third person point of view

In all the three novels investigated above, the author uses the third person point of view to bring out his themes. The omniscient point of view dominates the narration in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA.

In ELELWANI, the author develops his theme through the use of long descriptions and explanations. These not only tend to bore the readers, but that also interrupt the progression of plot. The readers are not keen to be told how the characters act, neither do they want detailed explanations from the narrator. They want to be given a chance to evaluate what they read. This is a major flaw in this narrative. To support my argument here, I would like to refer to Malmgren (1986 : 473) who maintains that when the narrator supplies his commentaries and judgments concerning the characters, events, and settings of the fictional world, the fictional world is channelled or interpreted for the readers. The theme of Maumela's first narrative is not conveyed out convincingly because the

fictional world is constantly being interpreted for the readers by the narrator. The interruption of the narrative flow makes this early work mediocre.

MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA is characterised by short descriptions and explanations of events, settings and characters. The author does not interrupt the development of plot by making unnecessary commentaries or passing judgment on the actions of the characters. He leaves the readers to form their own opinions about the characters from the descriptions and explanations provided. Maumela's means of narration in this novel renders the theme more convincing to the readers, because the reader's response is not tightly controlled.

Nevertheless, it is clear to the readers that the omniscient point of view acts as a major vehicle for the articulation of theme in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. The use of the omniscient point of view in this regard has had a great influence on the techniques of *character* portrayal - hence the use of the expository technique and the portrayal of setting.

The use of the dramatic point of view is prominent in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU. The readers get to know settings, events and characters from dialogue. There is no interruption of the progression of plot through long descriptions and explanations by the narrator. The narrator does not make unnecessary commentaries or pass judgment on the actions of the characters. The successful handling of theme in this novel is attributed to the excellent manipulation of the dramatic point of view. The use of the dramatic point of view has a marked influence on the techniques of *character* portrayal and the portrayal of settings. The dramatic point of view goes hand in hand with the dramatic method of *character* portrayal.

Even if one method of narration is prominent in these novels, the author manages to intermingle both the dramatic point of view and the omniscient point of view to bring out the themes of the novels. Had Maumela used only the dramatic point of view in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, the narrative would then have assumed a dramatic form. It is quite interesting to find that in some instances the narrator occasionally provides short explanations comprising some background information about the characters and the development of plot. On the other hand it would have bored the readers if the author had used the omniscient point of view only throughout ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA.

6.2 Techniques of characterization

From the discussion of the various narrative techniques used by Maumela, it is quite evident that these techniques are dependent on one another. If an author wants to achieve any success in the working out of his themes, then these techniques must be used to supplement one another.

In the three selected novels of Maumela, the readers clearly realise that the method of narration has, in a way, an influence on the depiction of characters. In ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA, the author dominates the narration with the omniscient point of view. The readers get to know the traits of characters from the narrator because the narrator plays a dominant role in supplying descriptions and explanations of characters. The expository technique is used in this regard. This method of character portrayal spoils the depiction of characters because it allows the narrator to make commentaries on the actions of the characters. Since this method of narration is not popular among modern readers, it renders the technique of characterization in these two novels poor. The narrator leads the readers in his perception of the character's traits. Through this method of narration, the traits of characters are not depicted, but revealed

by the narrator directly. The theme of the narrative in this regard is not depicted. Maumela should have used this method in the exposition of minor characters who have little to contribute to the development of plot because it is economical. Instead of using it in the revelation of minor characters, he uses it in the portrayal of main characters, such as Elelwani and Vele in ELELWANI and Musandiwa in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. The use of the expository technique in these novels is attributed to the frequent use of the omniscient point of view.

On the other hand, NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU is dominated by the dramatic method of narration. Maumela allows the characters to talk and act. This method of narration shows a major influence on the depiction of characters in this narrative. It involves the readers in the progression of plot since they recognise the traits and feelings of the characters on their own. They themselves are able to perceive the relationship between the traits of characters and the development of action. The narrator's chance of judging on behalf of the readers is very limited in this narrative. This method of depicting characters helps Maumela to weave a good plot and a convincing theme. The successful depiction of characters in this regard has been achieved through the use of the dramatic point of view.

If we consider the use of techniques of characterization in general, we realise that Maumela manages to create conflict among his characters by employing dialogue. This is best revealed in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU, and to a limited extent in ELELWANI and MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. He achieves this through his successful management of the devices of point of view and the handling of characters. This clearly shows that no technique can be fully independent of others.

6.3 Organization of material

In the organization of material, it is clear that Maumela relies on the effective use of the device of suspense and the technique of foreshadowing in some of his novels. The success of depicting theme in ELELWANI can be attributed to Maumela's effective use of suspense and the technique of foreshadowing. The two devices are not much used in MUSANDIWA NA KHOTSI VHO-LIWALAGA. There is little use of these techniques in NDI VHO-MUTHUKHUTHUKHU. The impression one gets, however, is that Maumela uses different narrative techniques to work out his themes in the novels.

In ELELWANI, Maumela successfully shows that suspense and foreshadowing supplement each other to bring out the theme. The readers learn that Vele promises Elelwani to come up with another plan to win her after failing to convince her to elope with him. He tells her that he will do all he can to win her, hence the readers are left in suspense because it is clear that she is about to be taken by Ratshihule. At the same time it is revealed that Vele and his parents are migrating to Mianzwi. The migration of Vele's parents to Mianzwi has nothing to do with the conflict between Elelwani and her parents, but this action acts as a foreshadowing since it hints at the direction the story is going to take. After succeeding in making Ratshihule evict Elelwani, the relationship between the migration of Vele's parents to Mianzwi and the plan which Vele promised Elelwani (which the readers are eager to know throughout the narrative) comes to the fore.

It is revealed at the end of the novel that the priest (Matshinyise) from Mianzwi who made the *khosi* evict Elelwani is Vele. After revealing this, the readers are satisfied that Vele's plan and the migration of his parents to Mianzwi had a remarkable contribution towards the development of plot. The device of suspense and the technique of foreshadowing have been well used to weave a good plot in this early novel.

The evaluation of the narrative techniques used by Maumela to convey his themes clearly shows that he is a successful author. It is therefore not surprising to note that one of Maumela's novels has been translated into English. *MAFANGAMBITI* was translated into English and published by Ravan Press in 1986. His message is no longer restricted to Venda readers only, but is also intended for readers of the other language groups. Maumela owes this to his skilful manipulation of the narrative techniques to bring out the themes of the novels.

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